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ABSTRACT

This document presents a series of essays on the relations between Australia and its neighboring Asian countries. Several of the essays focus on the history of particular groups of Asians who have lived or still live in Australia. Reasons for, and effects of, migration to Australia are analyzed. Five essays are included: (1) "Australia and its Region" (Michael Dugan); (2) "Restrictions to Recognition: China and Australia" (Morag Loh); (3) "Changing Balances: Japan and Australia" (Gavan McCormack); (4) "Above Down Under: Australia and Indonesia" (Richard Chauvel); and (5) "Indochinese Refugees and Australia" (Nancy Viviani). (DB)

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Department of Education and The Arts Tasmania Australia

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Shadow Play

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Based on the ABC TV Series.

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AUSTRALIA AND ITS REGION

Michael Dugan

For many thousands of years Aboriginal Australia had very little contact with other countries or their peoples. In the north there was some trade with people from the islands now known as Indonesia, and also contact with people from the islands now known as Papua New Guinea.

Then came visits from Dutch, French and British ships and the eventual decision by Britain to colonise the eastern coast of the southern continent, named New South Wales by Captain James Cook who had sailed it and claimed it for Britain in 1770. This decision was to lead to eventual total disruption of Aboriginal society as it had developed so far.

Of Australia's colonial governments, perhaps the first decision that might be seen as one of Pacific policy, was Commander Arthur Phillip's choosing to ignore an instruction from his superiors in London to pick up women from the Pacific Islands while the overwhelmingly male First Fleet was sailing towards Botany Bay, the site recommended for the foundation of a colony by Cook's botanist Joseph Banks. Phillip rejected the instruction on the humanitarian ground that for the women 'it would answer no other purpose than that of bringing them to pine away in misery'.[1]

In the years before and after Britain's colonisation of Australia there was a lot of action in the Pacific region as European powers set about establishing spheres of influence through colonisation and the establishing of trading bases.

Indonesia was already in Dutch hands although it passed into those of Britain for a period during the Napoleonic Wars. Present day Malaysia was partly occupied by the Dutch and partly by the British. In 1824 the Treaty of London defined British and Dutch interests, delivering Indonesia to the Dutch while Britain held sway in Malaysia.

The Philippines had been under Spanish control since the sixteenth century, while the Portuguese had long held the eastern part of the island of Timor. As was Britain's initial practice in Australia, New Caledonia was used by the French as a convict colony after it took possession in 1853.

The little convict colony in Australia, which had settled at Port Jackson after finding Botany Bay too swampy, took no great interest in the affairs of the countries to its north. In its early years it was preoccupied with survival.

Then, as coastal and inland exploration began to point out the potential of the land in which the colony had been founded, a wool-grazing industry developed and its wool trade with Britain became Australia's staple industry. New colonies were established: first in Van Diemen's Land, later to be renamed Tasmania; then at Swan River in Western Australia, in South Australia and in the Port Phillip District, later to become the Colony of Victoria.

Each new settlement further expanded Australia's grazing industry. By the 1830s the pastoralists had become economically and politically of vital importance to the colonies. Their demands for labour could not be satisfied by convict shipments, so subsidised immigration was introduced to bring working class immigrants from Britain.

The pastoralists' demands remained unsatisfied and they began to pressure the government in Sydney, among whom they were well represented, to subsidise 'coolie' labour from Asia. When the convict system began to wind down, from 1840, the pressure became more intense — fuelled not only by labour shortages but also by the knowledge that 'coolie' labour was cheap, with payment rates of about one-third of those paid to British labourers.

In the event the government decided against assisting Asian labour, although it recognised that this might become desirable when Australia's tropical north was settled, where it was felt that the climate would be too severe for white workers.

However, although there was no official support, there was nothing to prevent private entrepreneurs importing labour from Asian countries and, during the late 1840s, the first shiploads of labourers arrived from southern China. At about the same time, pastoralist Benjamin Boyd imported labourers from three Pacific islands of the group known as the 'Loyalties'.

These private schemes aroused considerable opposition from the infant Australian labour movement but, in any case, they proved to be self-defeating. Neither the Chinese nor the Pacific Islanders adjusted to the climate or the working conditions of shepherds in southern Australia. At the very time London papers were hailing Boyd's 'interesting experiment' in immigration he was shipping his labourers back to the Pacific islands.[2]

'Kanaka' girl, Mackay, Queensland, about 1900.

While European settlement expanded into Australia other European expansionist interests made further inroads into Asia and the Pacific.

Britain colonised New Zealand, used brute force to establish a sphere of influence in China and to gain Hong Kong as a base, and carved a further trading base out of the jungle around the mouth of the Singapore River.

In Vietnam the French began the process of invasion that, by the end of the nineteenth century, would give France control of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Japan and Thailand, which had closed their doors to western influence, had been forced to recognise the modern world — Japan after an ominous display of American naval strength and Thailand through fear that what had occurred in China, Japan and Indo China might also happen to it.

Australia took little interest in these events. In the early 1840s it weathered its first economic depression which had been largely caused by wild and ill-advised land speculation following Major Thomas Mitchell's opening up of the rich pastures of Australia Felix. British investment poured into New South Wales, land prices rocketed to unrealistic levels and, when the boom collapsed, the colony was left with the task of paying the interest on what had been borrowed.

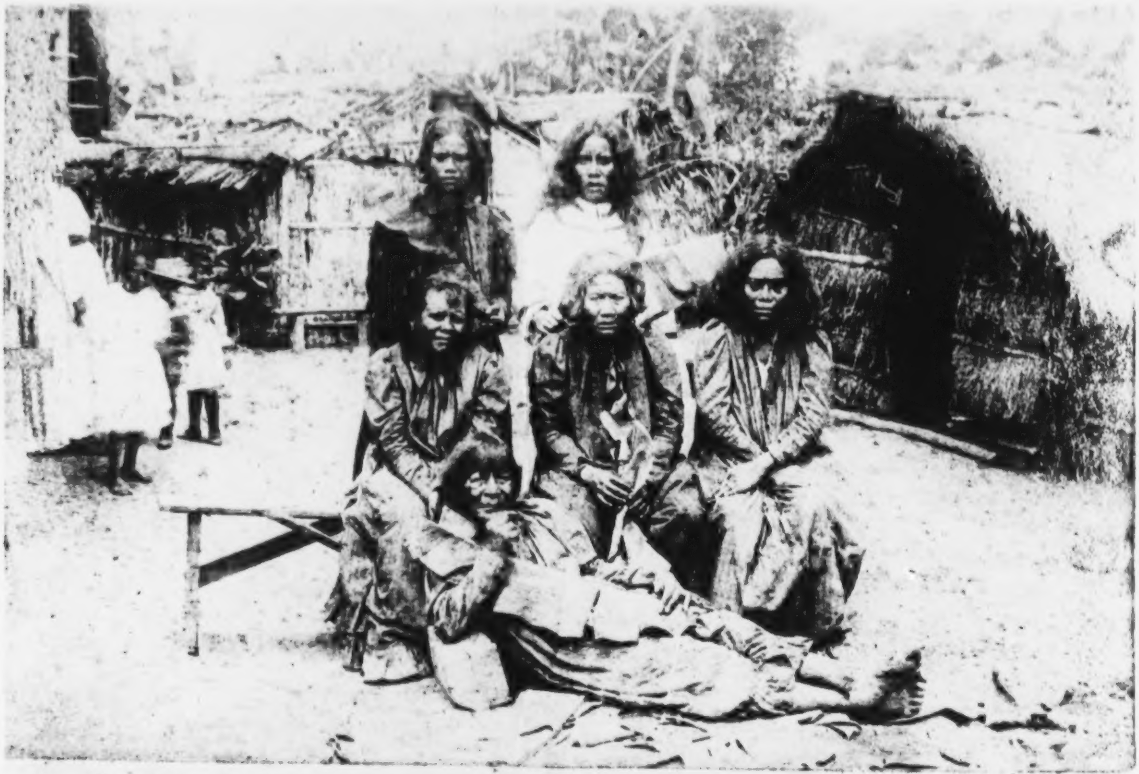
By the late 1840s the pastoral economy appeared to be on track again. In 1851 the discovery of gold in Victoria and New South Wales set the economies of those two colonies rocketing, though at first at some cost to the pastoralists whose labour supply dwindled with each new discovery.

Gold fever gripped Australia. The populations of other colonies diminished as prospectors poured into the two gold-bearing colonies. Goldseekers from all over the world followed them. Among them were a great many from southern China: more than forty thousand of them arriving in Victoria alone between 1852 and 1858.

As the numbers of Chinese on the goldfields increased, racist attitudes towards them developed among the other goldseekers. In 1857 a number of Chinese died at Victoria's Buckland River diggings when European miners banded together to drive the Chinese from the district. At Lambing Flat in New South Wales there were similarly vicious anti-Chinese riots in 1860 and 1861.

One by one Australian colonial governments took action, not by punishing the offenders but by restricting the victims' entry. As surface gold petered out many of the Chinese prospectors, who were largely young men who had borrowed against their expectations to travel to Australia, returned to China. Those that stayed did so in the face of hostility from many in the white community.

The point of view of the Chinese was simple and reasonable. When Britain had forced China to make concessions and to become a trading ally it had promised the Chinese that the British Empire would be open to them. Consequently, the Chinese felt that the Australian colonies, as part of that empire, had no right to discriminate against them or prevent them from entry.



Kanaka Women outside dwellings

This was not an argument acceptable to the Australian labour movement which increased in power during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It feared the importation of 'cheap' labour and regarded any non-European (and, for that matter, Southern European) immigrants as falling into this category. The Chinese in Australia were closed off from many avenues of employment by union bans on their membership, and were the subject of frequent and often virulent attacks in the labour press.

Towards the end of the century, as Australia moved towards federation, the question of colour became critical. The southern colonies, spurred on by the labour movement, wanted a 'whites only' Australia.

This was not acceptable in northern Queensland where a growing sugar industry was dependent on Pacific Islander labour which it had enticed, or in some cases kidnapped, to the colony. At one stage there was a movement to keep North Queensland out of the federation but the sugar growers were bribed into joining by the promise of Commonwealth funding that would allow them to replace what was seen as undesirable 'Kanaka' labour with European workers. The Kanakas, now that their services were no longer required, were to be sent back to their islands.

However, the concept of a 'white Australia' was unsettling to Britain which considered that it would be seen as offensive by Queen Victoria's 'coloured' subjects.

Britain's disquiet increased as, throughout the 1890s, the Australian colonies firmed in their opposition to 'coloured' immigration. In 1894 Britain negotiated an Anglo-Japanese treaty but the Australian colonies, at the 1896 Intercolonial Conference of Premiers, took no similar action because to do so 'would give the right of entry to Japanese'.[3]

Instead the Conference extended the provisions of the Chinese exclusion acts to cover all Asian people. Only Queensland dissented, Japanese labourers having recently been imported to work in its northern canefields. In 1897 Queensland became a party to the treaty with Japan although it retained the right to restrict immigration. However, Japan was critical of the conditions under which its labourers worked and were treated in Queensland and, for a while, placed its own restrictions on emigration to Queensland.

Even if it was not happy about its citizens travelling to Queensland to work there, Japan protested strongly at what it saw as the Australian colonies insulting its people by including them with the other Asian countries as groups to be excluded from Australia.

Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, also protested and used his influence to try to make Australia adopt a less overtly racist immigration policy. Disqualification, he said, 'excluded the Indian subjects of Great Britain solely for the difference of race and colour'. Moreover, it was 'offensive' to the Japanese, who were placed in the category of Asiatics 'regardless of their civilisation'.[4]

Australia's attitude was put by the new Commonwealth's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin: 'The unity of Australia means nothing if it does not imply a united race ... a people possessing the same general cast of character, tone of thought, the same constitutional training and traditions'.

Deakin did not lump the Japanese in with the other 'Asiatics' but decided they were too able for Australia's good, 'because of their high abilities' they might prove too strong in competition with the rest of Australia's labour force.[5]

A compromise was reached with Britain by federation. Australia adopted Chamberlain's suggestion as to a means of making its immigration policy less obviously racist. This was to introduce a 'dictation test' that could be applied selectively. A similar test had been previously adopted by Natal so that country could reject Asian immigrants on 'educational' rather than racial grounds.

The dictation test, on the surface, appeared inoffensive and it was hoped that its introduction would placate both the Japanese, who had objected strongly to the 'white Australia' proposals, and Britain's Indian subjects.

As the dictation test could be applied in any language of the immigration testing officials' choice, it was as effective a means of exclusion as any. That it was racist in its application can be seen from a 1906 immigration advertisement that proudly proclaimed that the test 'has never yet been applied to a white man'.[6]

While the Australian colonies moved towards federation and independence more colonising was going on in the Pacific. Fiji became a British possession in 1874 and, to provide labour for its sugar cane plantations, the British government arranged for the importation of Indian labourers on five-year indenture agreements.

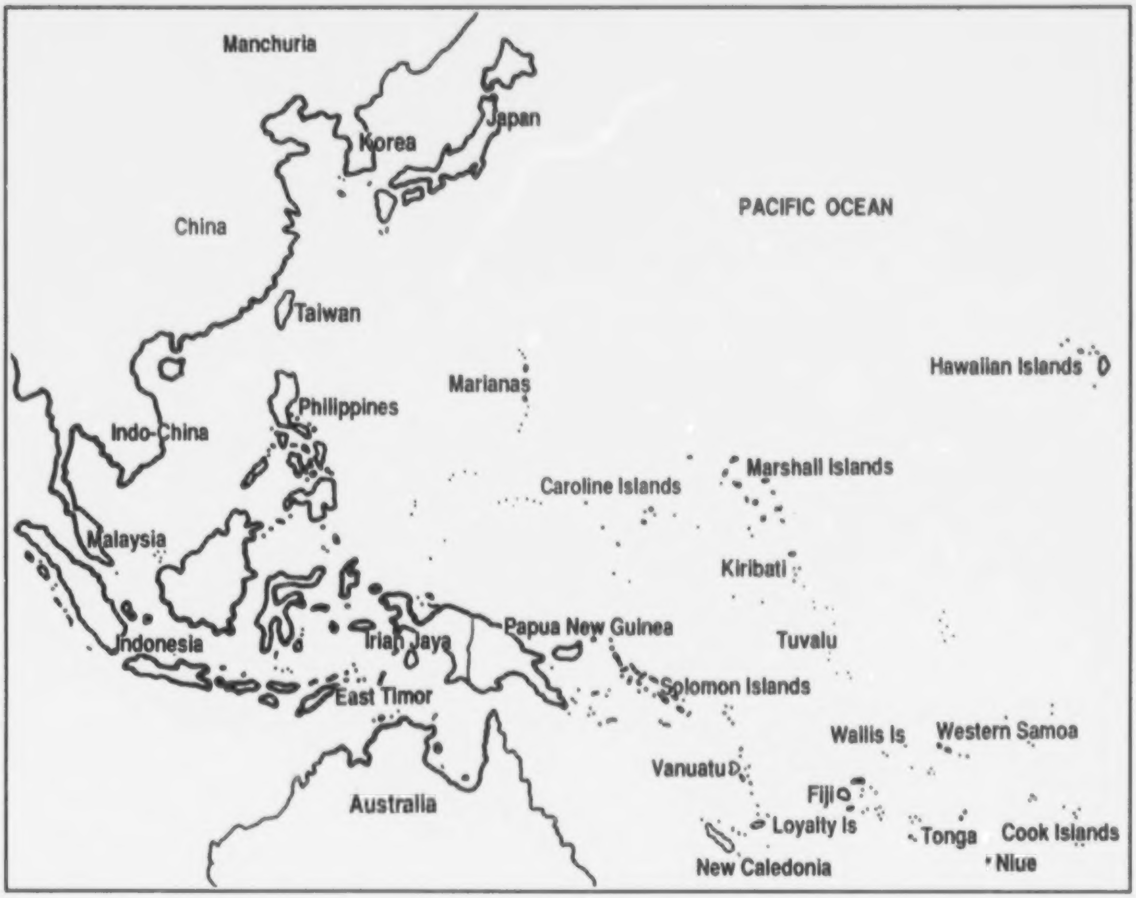
Between 1879 and 1916, when the scheme ceased, more than sixty thousand Indians moved to Fiji. The majority of them stayed on after their periods of indenture had finished, causing a significant change in the composition of the Fijian population.

A decade after Britain gained possession of Fiji, Germany annexed the north-east of the large island to Australia's north, New Guinea, while Britain annexed the south-eastern part of the island, Papua. This left the island in three hands as the Dutch already possessed West Irian, the western part of the island. Papua, or British New Guinea as it was called, was administered from Queensland with financial support from New South Wales and Victoria.

Australia's trade during the nineteenth century was primarily conducted with Britain. However, this was by no means exclusively the case.

As early as the last years of the eighteenth century there had been trade with China, initially with Australian traders exchanging sandalwood and sealskins for such Chinese products as tea, silks and chinaware. The early nineteenth century also saw trade with Tahiti and India and, as the century wore on, with other Asian and Pacific trading ports.

One of the original reasons given by James Stirling, Western Australia's first Governor, for


Manchuria
Japan
Korea
PACIFIC OCEAN
China
Taiwan
Hawaiian Islands
Marianas
Philippines
Indo-China
Marshall Islands
Caroline Islands
Malaysia
Kiribati
Papua New Guinea
Indonesia
Irian Jaya
Tuvalu
Solomon Islands
East Timor
Wallis Is
Western Samoa
Vanuatu
Australia
Fiji
Loyalty Is
Tonga
Cook Islands
Niue
New Caledonia

establishing a colony at Swan River was that it would give Australia a trading port closer to those of Asia. In the post goldrush era Chinese merchants in Australia established businesses to import goods from China for sale to Australian Chinese communities.

In spite of such trading initiatives on the part of entrepreneurs in Australia, the staple earner of overseas income, Australia's wool crop, continued to be sold to Britain, the main trading partner of the Australian colonies. In 1890 Britain accounted for more than seventy percent of Australia's export market and Britain was to remain Australia's dominant trading partner for many years after the creation of the Australian nation.

The Australian federation came with an Act of the British parliament and the new nation's constitution ensured that ties with Britain would remain strong. Australians were British subjects rather than Australian citizens, and Australia was happy to allow Britain to handle its foreign affairs as part of British imperial policy. Britain was seen as Australia's protector. Its military and naval presence in Malaya, Singapore and other Asian possessions was comforting to Australia, as was the Anglo/Japanese treaty of 1902 that allied Britain and Japan.

However, there were many who felt disturbed by the emergence of Japan in the international arena. Having been forced into the 'modern' world by the United States only half a century before, Japan had begun to show unexpected expansionist leanings.

In 1894 it declared war with China over which country would retain Korea as a sphere of influence. Japan emerged victorious, winning important territorial concessions from China. A decade later in 1905 Japan was involved in war with Russia over control of Manchuria and once more proved to be a formidable adversary, winning major concessions from the defeated Russians.

There was much talk of the 'yellow peril' and of the theory that Australia must 'populate or perish'. As the Immigration League put it in a pamphlet published in 1907: 'The only way to secure the standard of living of the white man in Australia is by having enough white men to defend it ... In our present state we invite invasion. Asia is crowded with teeming millions, always on the verge of famine. Eight hundred millions are within a few days' steaming time of our northern shores.'[7]

Australia renewed its efforts to attract immigrants from Britain, still considered the only really desirable source of Australian population.

That Australia would remain 'white' was ensured by one of the earliest Acts of its first parliament, the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* which included provision for the application of the dictation test.

The first parliament's *Pacific Island Labourers Act* provided for the deportation of those Pacific Islanders who had been brought to northern Queensland to labour on the canefields. Its implementation was clumsy and insensitive, splitting families, forcing people to leave who had been in Queensland for many years and who had come to regard it as their home, and sometimes returning people to islands that had not been their original homes and which might prove hostile towards them.

In the end, the government was pressured to allow more exemptions than it had originally intended under the Act and some Pacific Islanders who wished to remain in Queensland managed to do so by hiding until the deportations were over. Australia was now officially 'white', although officialdom turned a blind eye to certain areas where industries were dependent on 'coloured' labour, such as the pearl diving industry centred on Broome in Western Australia.

When, in 1914, Australia and Japan did become involved in war it was as allies. The Anglo-Japanese treaty withstood Britain's declaration of war on Germany and Japanese ships were used to convey Australian troops to the distant fields of battle. In its own area Japan rapidly divested Germany of a number of its smaller Pacific colonies and occupied Tsintao and the Shantung Peninsula which China had leased to Germany. Now on Chinese soil, Japan used its military strength to win major concessions from China's weak government. With the western powers too preoccupied with war in Europe and Africa to intervene, China had little option than to give way to the Japanese demands.

Although Australia's main involvement in the First World War was in Europe and Africa, one of its first actions was to seize control of that part of New Guinea which had been annexed by Germany thirty years before. In the post-war carve-up that followed Germany's surrender in 1918 both Australia and Japan gained former German possessions.

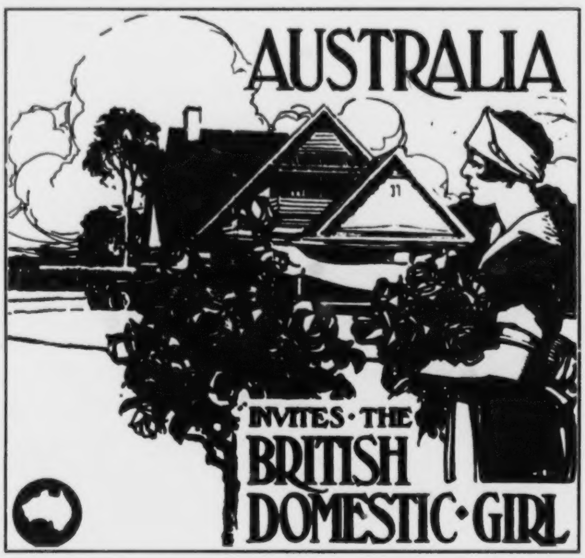
Japan was able to take over the lease of the Shantung Peninsula that had been previously held by Germany and the League of Nations allocated Japan, as mandated territories, three of the German Pacific colonies it had captured: the island groups of the Marshalls, Carolines and Marianas. A hard-fought battle by the Australian Prime Minister W.M. (Billy) Hughes won Australia the former German colony of New Guinea as a mandated territory.

The immediate post-war situation saw China in a state of political confusion and reorganisation, while Japan had gained considerably in its political influence in Asia. Britain retained its control of most of the Malay Peninsula and Singapore, the Netherlands its hold on Indonesia and West Irian, France its control of Indochina, and Portugal still held East Timor.

The Philippines had been ceded by Spain to the United States in 1899, following the short-lived Spanish-American War. Germany had lost its Pacific possessions to the United States, Japan and Australia. Most of the smaller Pacific island groups were in the control of either Britain, France, the United States, Japan, Australia or New Zealand.

Although Australia had been under no direct threat during the war its loss of lives overseas had been enormous. This first experience of a 'global' war had also brought home to it how dependent it was on Britain's defences and how vulnerable it might be if, as had happened during this war, Britain's military strength was occupied in other parts of the world.

Once more the call for increased population went out. Families were encouraged to have more children in the interest of their country and a range of government and private agencies did all they could to encourage immigration from Britain. Those from northern Europe were also welcome but southern Europeans were considered less acceptable and those that came did so without encouragement and at their own expense. As far as anyone else was concerned 'white Australia' was still very much the order of the day.



The type of immigrant 'white Australia' wanted.

The immigration and economic boom of the 1920s ended with the decade and the devestation caused to the Australian economy by the world Depression of the early 1930s. However, before the Depression set in, Australia had widened its trading horizons with a number of European countries, the United States and Japan.

In the building of the economy that followed the Depression Australia's overseas trade went through a difficult and complex process of international negotiation.

A preferential trade agreement between Britain and Australia in 1932 brought retaliation from some of the European countries with which Australia had been trading. Australian resentment of the unequal balance of trade between itself and the United States resulted in high tariffs being placed on some of the goods imported from America. This upset Japan which had been exporting goods in some of the same categories, and the Japanese retaliated against Australian wool. Australia began to discover some of the complexities involved in balancing its trade with larger and more powerful nations.

The 1930s also saw Australia venturing into the complex field of international diplomacy. Although its federal government had created a Department of External Relations early in its history its role and staffing had been minimal and it had been subsumed into the Department of the Prime Minister during the First World War.

In 1935 External Relations was separated from the Department of the Prime Minister and once more became an entity in itself, initially with a staff of twelve. From this point the growth of the reinstored Department was rapid and, for the first time, Australia began appointing diplomatic staff to countries other than Britain. Early appointments included countries in the Pacific region and Australian diplomatic representation had been extended to New Caledonia, Timor, Malaya, China and Japan by 1941.

At the Imperial Conference of 1937 Australian Prime Minister Joseph Lyons proposed that: 'Australia would greatly welcome a regional understanding and a pact of non-aggression by the countries of the Pacific'.[8] This noble intention was doomed to failure. Not only was the United States opposed to such a pact but within months of Prime Minister Lyons' proposal Japan and China were at war.

Since the end of the First World War China had been engaged in a long and difficult process of political reconstruction. In 1921 members of the Kuomintang had elected Dr Sun Yatsen as president of what was largely a nominal Chinese republic. Sun set out to strengthen the Kuomintang both politically and militarily. When Sun died in 1925 his successor, former director of the Kuomintang military academy, Jiang Kaishek, was able to rally the military strength of the Kuomintang and widen its influence beyond Canton (Guangzhou), where it had previously held sway, by a systematic process of seizing power from China's regional rulers one by one. By the mid-1930s all but communist-held Western China was controlled by the Kuomintang.

In Japan also much had been happening since the end of the First World War. The 1920s saw great increase in its industrial capacity and earnings of export income. There was some relaxation of its rigid political system, which during the war had been dominated by militarists, and its future prospects looked bright.

However, the 1930s brought two major threats to them: the Depression ended the rapid economic growth and the growing strength of Jiang Kaishek in China made it likely that this formerly pliant country would become a force to be reckoned with. In 1931 Japan occupied Manchuria by force and set about establishing a puppet state there. China complained to the League of Nations and the League ruled against Japan as aggressor. Japan responded by resigning from the League and refusing to give up the former German colonies it held under mandate from the League which, against the terms of the mandate, it had fortified.

The League of Nations appeared powerless to act against this show of strength by the Japanese, a factor which encouraged the militarists in Japan to the view that aggressive policies and action would bring further rewards.

Whether, if the League had taken firm action against Japan over the invasion of Manchuria, the future course of events would have been different can be only a matter for conjecture. As it was, throughout the thirties the League was increasingly seen to be ineffectual against developments such as Italy's invasion of Abyssinia and the rise of Hitler's Germany.

Japan, concerned at Jiang's continuing success and by the Kuomintang's gaining control of Peking seized its moment and invaded without declaration of war in July 1937. At first it appeared that a Japanese victory was assured but China rallied its forces against the aggressor and a drawn-out battle of resistance began and continued while, in Europe, a second 'world' war began.

With the major European powers once again preoccupied with war in Europe and Africa, Japan turned its attention to those South East Asian countries that had been colonised by European powers during the previous century.

Japanese propaganda in what was then French Indochina was effective and directed towards promoting Japan as a force liberating Asia from European domination. When, in 1940, Japan occupied Vietnam it was seen initially as a liberator. However, the resulting confusion gave impetus to the underground Vietnamese nationalist movement which, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, organised an independence league, the Viet Minh, with the aim of ridding the country from domination by either France or Japan. The Viet Minh began to establish its own sphere of influence in the north of the country.

When Britain declared war on Germany, Australia once more followed suit without question. Troops sailed for the major theatres of war — Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. However, the Australian perspective on the war changed when, on 7 December 1941, Japan bombed the American military installations at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. The United States and Australia had declared war on Japan within twenty-four hours of the bombing.

Simultaneously with the bombing of Pearl Harbour Japanese forces began to advance south through Malaya towards Singapore, the main British defence base in the region. Australia was shocked by the speed and success of the Japanese advance. By mid-February 1942 Singapore had fallen. The British forces in South Asia, which Australia had long seen as its own potential protector, had proved to be a paper tiger.

Four days after the collapse of Singapore Japanese planes attacked Darwin, wrecking much of the northern city and killing 233 people. For the first time in its history Australia had come under direct attack. Australian confidence was further undermined by reports of Japanese midget submarines in Sydney Harbour.

The Japanese forces swept south through the Pacific occupying island after island. Within months of the bombing of Pearl Harbour they had landed in Indonesia where many welcomed them as liberating the country from colonialism, in this case by the Dutch.

Thousands of Dutch residents were interned and many Indonesian nationalist leaders were released from imprisonment. One of them, Dr Ahmed Sukarno, became president of an Indonesian advisory council to the Japanese. Indonesia's movement for independence, which had been firmly battened down by the Dutch administration, gained much impetus during the Japanese occupation.

During July 1942, the Japanese landed in New Guinea and began to force their way along the rugged Kokoda Trail towards Port Moresby, driving the Australian troops sent to resist them back before them. By now the American General Douglas MacArthur had taken command of the allied forces in the South-West Pacific and had begun the gradual process of forcing back the Japanese advance by retaking island after island. In New Guinea the tide turned in September and the Australian troops began to force the Japanese back along the Kokoda Trail.

There were, however, three years to go of painstaking island hopping towards Japan by the Americans, Australians and New Zealanders. When the war ended it did so suddenly, with the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which resulted in damage and loss of life so vast and horrific that the Japanese emperor, Hirohito, had no option but to surrender under whatever terms were demanded of his country.

The experience of having been under direct attack and having an enemy established as close as New Guinea had been an extremely alarming one for Australia, which previously had hoped that its distance from any likely aggressor and the British military presence in South Asia would protect it from any risk of invasion.

It was now obvious that there was little point in looking towards war-crippled Britain as a big brother to defend Australian shores. America had taken Britain's place and it would now be with the United States that Australia's most important treaties would be signed. Six years after the end of the war Australia, New Zealand and the United States signed the ANZUS treaty under which each, in the event of armed attack on any one of them, declared that it would 'act to meet the common danger'.

The fear of invasion from the north had long been a part of the Australian consciousness. The fact that fear had come close to being realised brought the 'populate or perish' theory back into the forefront of Australian thinking.

In the closing stages of the war, when Australia was no longer in any danger of direct attack, its politicians began planning a post-war immigration program. A month before the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan, Arthur Calwell was appointed as the first Australian Minister for Immigration. In his first Ministerial statement he announced that: 'If Australians have learnt one lesson from the Pacific War . . . it is surely that we cannot continue to hold our island continent for ourselves and our descendants unless we greatly increase our numbers'.[9]

However, increasing Australia's numbers was not to be achieved at the expense of the 'white Australia' policy. Calwell was, and remained, firmly of the opinion that immigration from Asia or any other 'non-white' source would result in crippling racial disharmony. At the time he became minister his views reflected those of the majority of Australians who, apart from any other factors, had just lived through several years of fervent anti-Japanese propaganda.

At an international level Australia's immigration policy did not go unchallenged. In 1945, at the first United Nations conference, other members of the fledgling replacement for the League of Nations attacked the Australian policy as racist and not conducive to international harmony. The Australian delegates responded by fighting hard to ensure that the new world organisation would not receive such powers over member nations' domestic affairs as would allow it to endanger Australia's 'all-white' status.

Although post-war Australia did not want people from its northern neighbouring countries coming there to live, it did want to maintain good relations with them. To this end it established an aid program directed to assisting the economic development of Asian countries.

This could also be seen to have its protective element: if Asian Countries achieved better economic conditions they might be less inclined to look with acquisitive envy towards Australia. Under the Colombo Plan, which Australia joined at its inauguration in 1950, many thousands of young people from South and South-East Asia were brought to Australia to further their education so that when they returned to their home countries they could apply their new skills.

Japan in the years immediately following the war was occupied by allied forces, mainly American but including Australian troops, under the command of General MacArthur. Japan's military forces were demobilised and the long process of bringing Japanese leaders and military personnel under trial for war crimes was instituted.

MacArthur exempted Emperor Hirohito from such trial, considering that retribution would be less valuable than having Japan's Emperor as an ally during post-war reconstruction. Japan was stripped of its overseas territories, including those colonies it had won from Germany in the First World War.

Unwelcome in either their mothers' or fathers' countries, these children, photographed at Ho Chi Minh Ville in 1981, were fathered by white Servicemen during the Vietnam War.

Under MacArthur, the Japanese political system was democratised and the process of rebuilding its economy and industry began — an enormous task given the damage caused by a war which had destroyed nearly half Japan's factories, lost it the colonies from which much of its raw materials for industry had come, largely destroyed its transport systems and exhausted and demoralised its people.

In spite of all these factors Japan rebuilt its economy with surprising speed. Important to this was the high level of aid that the United States, in the interest of creating a westernised Japan that would act as a bulwark against communism in South Asia, poured into the country. This was not limited to financial aid but included access to America's industrial and technological expertise. The Korean War of the early 1950s, during which Japan was a major supplier of goods and services to the United Nations forces, also assisted the return to prosperity.

By 1955 Japanese production had, in fact, equalled its previous high. Five years later it had doubled and it had doubled again by 1966. Within a very short time of its crippling defeat Japan had turned its collapsed economy into a buoyant one and had become one of the major exporting nations of the world.

In Australia anti-Japanese feeling remained strong, largely due to the atrocities committed upon Australian prisoners of war of the Japanese during the Second World War. However, Australia had to accept the reality of Japan's becoming the dominant economic force in the region.

In 1957, five years after the occupation forces had withdrawn from Japan, the two nations signed a trade agreement giving each other 'favoured nation' status. In 1960 Australia lifted its long-standing ban on selling iron ore to Japan, a step that revived the then Prime Minister Robert Menzies nickname of 'Pig Iron Bob', a name that had first been bestowed upon him in 1938 when he used industrial legislation to force waterside workers in protest at Japan's invasion of China to load iron for export to Japan.

The lifting of the ban gave great impetus to both Western Australia's mining industry and Japan's steel-making industry. By the mid-1970s Japan accounted for about a third of Australia's export trade.

Where Japan had westernised after the war, China had taken a very different direction. The long-standing rift between Jiang Kaishek's nationalists, on the one side, and Mao Zedong's communists, on the other, had narrowed temporarily during the 1930s when the armies of the two were both concerned with resisting the Japanese invasion. However, with the ending of the war and the removal of any threat from Japan, the rift widened into open conflict with the nationalists supported by America and, to a lesser extent, Britain, and the communists supported by Russia.

During the two years from 1947 the communist forces moved ever eastwards from their stronghold, taking city after city from Jiang's control. By mid-1949 they were in control of the whole of China and had forced Jiang Kaishek and many of his supporters from the mainland.

The former nationalist leaders established themselves on the island of Formosa which, renamed Taiwan, was recognised by the American government as 'free' China. The American government refused to recognise that of Mao Zedong and worked actively against its interests in the United Nations Assembly. In this it was supported by Australia which saw its alliance with the United States as its most important factor in determining foreign policy.

On the mainland, on 1 October 1949, Mao proclaimed the People's Republic of China and began to implement a social and economic revolution on an unprecedented scale. Cadres were set up in each town and village, land redistributed, foreign investment made so difficult it was effectively prohibited, and the first of a series of Five Year Plans, each with defined goals, instituted.

In nearby French Indochina the years following the war also brought massive changes. After the Japanese defeat Jiang Kaishek's forces moved into the northern region of Vietnam and assisted Viet Minh leader Ho Chi Minh to establish a communist government in that part of the country.

When Jiang's forces withdrew to assist in resisting the advance of Mao's forces on the homefront, the French moved north and, assisted by the United States, attempted to wrest back control of northern Vietnam. By 1954 they had to admit defeat and a United Nations conference in Geneva divided Vietnam into two countries, the communist North Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh's leadership, and South Vietnam where the United States established a regime under Ngo Dinh Diem.

In response to Diem's harsh and corrupt leadership a National Liberation Front was formed in South Vietnam, its army becoming known as the Viet Cong. In 1960 war broke out between North and South Vietnam and America increased its military aid to the South while both Russia and Mao Zedong's China assisted North Vietnam and the southern communist forces. America gave its support under much international criticism and called upon its ANZUS allies to help legitimise its actions by sending forces to Vietnam.

Australian troops were sent to South Vietnam from 1965 amid ever increasing opposition at home to Australian participation in the war. This opposition mounted to such a level that it saw what were probably the largest demonstrations in Australian history and, ultimately, was instrumental in bringing down the long-running conservative government in 1972.

As the war continued it became increasingly obvious that the American-South Vietnamese alliance could not win. A face-saving peace settlement was negotiated in 1973 and America and its allies withdrew their forces following it. It was not long before North and South were at war again and, in 1975, the South Vietnamese government surrendered. In July 1976 the countries were reunited as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. For some time before this refugees had been streaming from South Vietnam to nearby countries of South-East Asia.

In neighbouring Cambodia (Kampuchea) the French had appointed the teenage Prince Norodom Sihanouk to the throne in 1941. In 1954 Cambodia gained independence from France and, in the following year, Sihanouk abdicated in his parents' favour so he could form a political party and lead the government. In this he was successful and, although he resumed the throne on the death of his father, he remained a dominant force in Cambodian politics. During the 1960s Cambodia turned away from America, largely due to that country's role in the Vietnam War.

The 1960s saw a decline in Cambodia's economic situation and, with this, increasing political unrest. In 1970 Sihanouk was deposed by the right wing general Lon Nol who, supported by the United States, declared a Khmer Republic. However, civil war continued, with the communist Khmer Rouge, backed by North Vietnam and China, increasingly becoming the dominant force.

By April 1975 the Khmer Rouge, under the leadership of Pol Pot, had gained control of the country. Pol Pot's regime was harsh and oppressive and, in 1979, it was overthrown when the Vietnamese, who had grown disenchanted with Pol Pot's government, invaded and occupied Cambodia. A new coalition government was established in 1982 but Cambodia's political situation has remained unstable.

Although communist guerilla forces have plagued governments in Malaysia and caused the British and Australian governments to maintain military bases for security purposes for many years, Malaysia's development as a nation was smoother than those of France's former Indo-Chinese colonies.

In 1963 Malaysia was formed as an independent nation comprising the former British colonies of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore. Two years later Singapore left the federation and established itself as an independent nation. Comparative political stability allowed Malaysia, and particularly Singapore, to develop economically in a way that was impossible for the war-torn Indo-Chinese countries.

In the closing years of the Second World War Japan had drawn up plans for Indonesia's independence. However, the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan brought the war to a sudden close before the plans could be implemented. Two days after Japan's surrender Dr Sukarno proclaimed Indonesia's independence. Indonesian independence was unacceptable to the country's former colonial masters and for several years the Dutch maintained a futile and expensive war to retain their colony.

By 1949 they realised they were not going to be successful against Indonesia's large population and guerilla warfare tactics. They withdrew and Indonesia became an independent republic in August 1950, with Dr Sukarno as its president.

From the first, Indonesia took an extremely independent line, demanding and receiving in 1962 the western part of New Guinea, Irian Jaya, that had been retained by the Dutch, and strongly opposing the federation of Malaysia as a creation of colonialism. When Malaysia was elected to the United Nations Security Council Indonesia resigned from the United Nations in protest.

Indonesia's takeover of Irian Jaya has been resisted by the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) since the late 1960s. Indonesia has refused to recognise the OPM as a nationalist resistance movement, merely branding its guerilla forces as terrorists. In 1984 some thousands of Melanesians crossed the border from Irian Jaya into Papua New Guinea, which later arranged with Indonesia to have them 'repatriated'.

Melanesian opposition to Indonesian policy in regard to Irian Jaya is largely concerned with the Transmigration Program under which Indonesia aims to relieve overcrowding in Java and Bali by moving large numbers of peasants to outer islands. In Irian Jaya's case this means the surrendering of land by the local Melanesian population to the newcomers.

In 1975 the Portuguese withdrew from the colony they had long held on the island of Timor. In East Timor, Fretilin, a radical nationalist movement, seized control and declared an independent Democratic Republic of East Timor. Almost immediately Indonesia, concerned at Fretilin's communist affiliations, invaded and drove the Fretilin forces underground. Indonesia then annexed East Timor which became its twenty-seventh province.

In the Philippines independence came very soon after the end of the Second World War. In fact, an act of the United States Congress had promised independence within a decade of its passing in 1935. Japanese occupation during the war had prevented this, but in July 1946 Manuel Roxas assumed office as the first president of an independent Philippines. However, his government was corrupt and partly made up of collaborators with the Japanese. It was strongly opposed by a wartime anti-Japanese movement, the Hukbalahap, which had won seats in the congress that Roxas refused to allow its representatives to take up.

The Philippines since independence has had a history of political and ethnic groups at odds with its governments, and one of corruption within its governments. In 1972 the sixth President, Ferdinand Marcos, declared martial law and shackled the previously vocal press.

Marcos' regime lasted until 1986 but became increasingly notorious for its corruption. Eventually a coup caused him to flee the country and elections held in the aftermath of the coup brought President Cory Aquino to power. However, her regime has also been a troubled one with attempts at further coups and divisions within her cabinet.

The post-war years have seen many Pacific island nations become independent of their former colonial rulers. For the British colonies in the region the 1970s was the decade in which most became independent: Fiji and Tonga in 1970, the Solomon Islands in 1977, Tuvalu in 1978 and Kiribati in 1979. Vanuatu, formerly administered by

Britain and France, gained independence in 1980.

The New Zealand administered Western Samoa became independent in 1962 and two smaller former New Zealand territories, the Cook Islands and Niue, are now self-governing while retaining a free association with nearby New Zealand.

The French have taken a different line with their Pacific possessions. In 1959 Wallis and Futuna were incorporated as part of the Republic of France. French Polynesia remains a territory of France as does New Caledonia. In recent years the latter has seen troubled times with a strong independence movement, the Front de Liberation National Kanak et Socialiate (FLNKS), made up of members of the indigenous Kanak population, firmly opposing continued French domination.

Chicken factory, 1981. Menial work has always been the lot of newly arrived immigrants in Australia.

The indigenous population of New Caledonia, like that of Fiji, is a minority of the total population. Ethnic Fijian fears of its Indian majority population gaining political control of the country led, in 1987, to military coups aimed at ensuring that Fijians would continue to control government. This brought dangerous instability, politically and economically, to what previously had appeared an economically successful democracy.

Papua New Guinea gained independence from Australia in 1975 and has developed as a constitutional democracy within the Commonwealth of Nations. Although still partly dependent on Australian aid, its own economy has expanded significantly since independence, although recent unrest on Bougainville, forcing the closure of mining operations there, has threatened the nation's economy.

In 1987 its Prime Minister, Paias Wingti, announced a new Joint Declaration of Principles to be signed by his and the Australian governments. This recognises that the two countries are no longer in an 'early post-colonial relationship' but that their relationship is one between independent and equal neighbours.[10]

Australia after the Second World War was occupied with its own program of post-war reconstruction. The immigration program it had planned coincided with a long-lasting economic boom that brought ever increasing demands for immigrant labour.

To obtain these immigrants Australia extended its immigration net to include the countries of Southern Europe and wider fields, such as Lebanon and Turkey. It began its immigration program with a policy of assimilation that assumed that immigrants would have little difficulty in discarding their own cultural heritages in exchange for what was then popularly called the 'Australian way of life'.

When assimilation proved to be not such a simple matter as first envisaged, the emphasis became one of integration. This assumed that immigrants who had learnt to use Australian institutions, found employment and wanted to stay, had 'integrated' into the Australian community, regardless of what vestiges of their cultural backgrounds they wished to maintain.

In the 1970s there were further changes resulting, in the last year of the decade, in the adoption by the Australian government of a policy of multiculturalism. This policy encouraged its ethnic groups to maintain their cultures and recognised the cultural input of different ethnic communities as a factor enriching Australian society.

Marching with these changes came a change in attitude towards the immigration of 'non-white' peoples. The 1960s saw a considerable relaxing of the 'white Australia' policy and the coming of the Whitlam government in 1972 was its death knell.

Under Whitlam Australia's immigration policy was redrawn on non-discriminatory lines. The largest Asian groups to settle in Australia since the new policy have been those from France's former Indo-Chinese colonies. Although there has been some opposition to Asian immigration and debate over desirable numbers, indications to date are that the settlement of Indo-Chinese in Australia has been very successful.

Australia's first priority in foreign policy since the war has been to maintain good relations with its major post-war ally, the United States. The first test of their new relationship came in 1950, after North Korean troops crossed the border into South Korea. The United States interpreted this as the first step in a process of increased 'communisation' of South Asia and responded by mobilising its military forces against North Korea. Australia immediately declared its support and sent troops to assist the United States and South Korea.

An armistice signed three years later brought the fighting to an end, although South Korea remains technically still in a state of declared war with North Korea. Since the ending of the Korean War, South Korea has become one of Australia's major trading partners.

In September 1954 at Manila, Australia became one of the founding members of the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) when eight countries signed the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, a treaty directed towards resisting communist subversion of South-East Asia. Its obligations under SEATO were given as a reason by Australia for involving itself in the Vietnam War, although other SEATO members did not become involved.

Australian policy towards Asia for the twenty-five years after the Second World War was largely motivated by fears of communist expansion throughout the region. At first the bogey for these fears was the People's Republic of China. Its occupation of Tibet in 1950 reinforced fears of further Chinese expansion.

As time wore on, and China appeared uninterested in invading the rest of Asia, although interested in supporting communist independence and other movements in neighbouring countries, a 'domino' theory was developed that caused further concern to America and Australia.

This theory assumed that the countries of southern Asia would be infiltrated and taken over by Chinese-supported communist movements until there were no 'free' southern Asian countries left: they would have collapsed, one after the other, like a set of standing dominoes pushed by a finger. The domino theory was central to the United States' attempt to assist the South Vietnamese government to resist invasion and infiltration from North Vietnam.

Australia refused to recognise the People's Republic of China until after the Whitlam government came into power. Just as Australia's refusal to recognise China had followed America's lead, its establishment of diplomatic relations followed a relaxation of American attitudes and the historic visit of America's President Nixon to the People's Republic in 1971.

Although Australia did not formally recognise China's communist government until 1973 this had not stopped it trading with the potential threat to Asian security. However, trade agreements signed between the countries soon after recognition strengthened their trade with each other. Since, trade between them has increased considerably, with the two countries undertaking a number of joint ventures, such as the fifteen-year, $250 million plan to develop a new iron ore mine at Mount Channar in Western Australia.

Australia has been a member of the South Pacific Forum since its foundation in 1971. Australia's situation is not that of most other member nations who have much more recently broken free from their colonial ties. Australia is economically more powerful and stable than most other member countries and is in the position of giving financial aid to many member countries.

Although Australia is a nation of little consequence in the deliberations of the large and powerful nations of the world, to its fellow Forum members it is a large and affluent nation that sometimes appears to be attempting to play a dominating role in the affairs of small Pacific countries. It has, at times, used the withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal of aid to add weight to its stance, most recently when it withdrew aid from Fiji after the formation of a military interim government there in 1987.

From the perspectives of small, recently independent island nations, many of them with uncertain economies, Australia can be seen as an overbearing 'big brother'. Australian attempts to influence, for instance, Vanuatu's foreign policies, were met with stinging rebuffs from that country's Prime Minster, Walter Lini, who attacked Australia's and New Zealand's 'neo-colonialism' as a threat to regional security in the South Pacific.[11]

In recent years the formation of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, founded in 1986, has given a separate and independent voice to the Melanesian members of the South Pacific Forum.

In its relations with Indonesia, Australia has been much more hesitant to criticise, allowing its largest near neighbour to occupy East Timor and Irian Jaya with little more than token objection. Indonesia's size, its important position in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), an influential voice in regional affairs formed by Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines in 1967 and joined by Brunei in 1984, its economic ties with Australia and the fact that both nations are part of the United States backed alliance in the region, have led Australia to adopt a closed-eye attitude to Indonesia's 'neo-colonialism'.

There would seem to be an inconsistency in Australia's lack of support for Fretilin in East Timor, or the similar indigenous Irian Jayan independence movement, when compared with its support for independence in New Caledonia where there is no popular mandate for independence demanded by the indigenous Kanak minority of the population.

A further inconsistency can be seen from comparing the Australian attitude to New Caledonia with its attitude to Fiji, where it has withdrawn support from a government that came about through the indigenous minority's wish to retain political control of the country.

Australian international diplomacy has a relatively short history and was founded on the diplomatic traditions of Great Britain and Europe. In its region, however, it is dealing with countries of very different backgrounds and traditions, some of whom have had to fight harsh battles for independence from European colonial masters, and some for whom independence has been a very recent development.

It is only in recent years that Australia has really seen itself as in an interdependent relationship with the countries of its region: a realisation reinforced by the United Kingdom's 1973 entry into the European Economic Community, which weakened Australian trading ties with its own former colonial master. Australia's economic future now seems largely tied to those of Asian countries, important among them Japan and China, towards which Australia's attitude has had to change in a short time.

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RESTRICTIONS TO RECOGNITION CHINA AND AUSTRALIA

Morag Loh

We do not know when the first contact between Australia and China occurred. If anthropologists are correct in suggesting that the ancestors of some Aborigines came from China, then it was in the pre-historic era. It is also possible that Chinese visited our coastlines in more recent times.

Fragments of pottery from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) have been found on northern beaches, but it is not known whether they are the remains of utensils brought by Chinese or by Indonesians who acquired them through trade with Chinese — such as fishermen from Macassar in Sulawesi who regularly searched for beche-de-mer in Australian waters.[1]

During the Ming dynasty, government sponsored expeditions and private traders from China visited South-East Asia and, by the middle of the eighteenth century, hundreds of trading junks were calling at ports in Thailand, Vietnam, Malaya and Indonesia. Did some venture further south to Australia? Were Aborigines the first Australians in modern times to set eyes on a Chinese?

What is certain is that by 1788, when the British government was establishing a colony in New South Wales, British merchants were leaders in a growing foreign trade with China, which operated out of the southern port of Guangzhou. In 1751, British ships comprised 10 of the 19 from Europe and America which called there and in 1791, when the number of such vessels had risen to 57, no fewer than 39 were British.

Tea was the key item of trade, accounting for 90-95 percent of Chinese exports to Britain, where tea drinking had become a national habit. London workers spent 5 percent of their household budgets on it[2] and duties levied on tea imports provided at least one-tenth of English revenue. Porcelain, known as chinaware after its country of origin, raw silk and rhubarb were also imported.

Goods offered by Britain in return such as woollens, linen, fur and various metals, had little appeal to the Chinese. They had more interest in products from India, however, and about 30 percent of British trade with China was in the hands of India-based merchants who imported Chinese cotton cloth, porcelain and sugar, while supplying the Chinese with ivory, sandalwood and substantial quantities of raw cotton and opium.

British colonists in Australia knew of China and its products, even if their perceptions of its location were at times fanciful — for instance, until the Blue Mountains were crossed in 1810, many convicts believed that, if they could escape beyond them, they would find themselves at liberty in China.

There were also a few Chinese residents in the early colonies, sailors who jumped ship, adventurers or wanderers like Moon Chow, who arrived in Fremantle from India in 1829.[3] A boatbuilder by trade, he found work as a carpenter, and stayed on. Systematic contact between the people of Australia and China in modern times, however, began in the 1840s and occurred as a direct result of changes in relations between Britain and China.

Although their China trade was lucrative, the British found it a frustrating business, largely because their world view and that of the Chinese were at variance. The Chinese, who in the eighteenth century had the world's greatest empire, had traditionally placed themselves at the centre and pinnacle of civilisation, ranking other peoples below them in order of inferiority and expecting all to acknowledge China's supremacy. They maintained, as the Chinese Emperor explained to England's King George III in 1793, that 'Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated into every country under heaven ...'[4]

Europeans, in the eighteenth century expanding their empires world wide, also saw themselves as leaders of civilisation, superior to the non-Europeans they had conquered and colonised. But their world view recognised the existence of independent nation states, whose relationships were defined by a system of international law.

Among these European states in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Britain was the foremost trading and industrial power. Anxious to expand their trade, the British approached the Chinese as equals, but despite representations by merchants and diplomats, the Chinese would not concede them equality on any front - the idea was simply inconceivable. Foreign traders were restricted, largely to the port of Guangzhou, and there confined to the margins of the city, apart from Chinese society.

Although the self-sufficient, agrarian-based Chinese economy had little use for Britain's products, trade was tolerated partly 'to treat strangers from afar with indulgence and to exercise a pacifying control over barbarian tribes the world over'[5] and partly because it was profitable. At least 90 percent of British purchases were paid for in gold or silver rather than commodities, injecting 26 million ounces of silver into the Chinese economy between 1800 and 1810 alone. Not until the late 1820s, with the accelerating importation of Indian-grown opium, did the balance of trade turn in Britain's favour.

The Chinese had used opium as medicine for centuries but when it was increasingly smoked for pleasure, it was banned in 1729. From 1773, when the British took the lead in the opium trade from the Portuguese, they expanded it, extending large-scale smuggling with the complicity of corrupt Chinese officials. Gradually, millions of Chinese became addicts, silver flowed out of China —10 million ounces between 1831 and 1833 — and the economy suffered stagnation and inflation. The Chinese government became seriously alarmed.

When in 1839 the Chinese acted decisively to stop the opium trade, the British, faced with a massive loss of profits, went to war. Superior technology, in the form of guns and ships, brought them victory, thus reinforcing the European world view and dealing the first of a series of blows against that of the Chinese. Among the many provisions of the Treaty of Nanking, 1842, Britain was ceded Hong Kong, while Shanghai, Ningpo, Fuzhou, Guangzhou and Xiamen — now known as treaty ports — were opened to foreign trade. People from Guangzhou and Xiamen would later play a very significant role in Chinese-Australian contact.

Sino-British relations were shaped by Britain's need for trade; Sino-Australian relations by the colonial need for labour. Sexual imbalance in Australia's European population — there were two males to every female in 1841 — meant that population growth was slow and depended on the arrival of convicts and free settlers, many of whom, after 1831, were assisted migrants brought by a government anxious to boost settler numbers.[6] Western Australia, which had no convicts before 1850, had a desperate labour shortage and in the east, the pastoral industry, the basis of the economy, depended on convict workers.

When convict transportation ceased in 1840, eastern pastoralists sought an alternative cheap, biddable workforce. Indentured labourers, whose oppressive contracts placed them mid-way between slaves and free workers, had long been used in the Americas and, at the very time when China was being forced to open its ports to international trade, indentured Asian workers, generally known as coolies, were suggested as a solution to colonial labour problems.

The suggestion aroused disapproval. British authorities, having recently abolished slavery, did not favour a workforce of semi-slaves and expressed concern that racial intermixture would 'debase' Europeans. Free settlers, having campaigned to end the unfair economic competition of cheap convict labour, opposed its replacement with poorly paid bonded workers, who, they believed, would also be servile and immoral; colonial government committees spoke against 'establishing here in perpetuity a race of different origin, colour and habits from the European and necessarily doomed to occupy a station of inferiority'.

But pastoralists insisted that they needed Asian labourers — cheap, hardworking and docile. All groups, in accordance with the European world view, assumed a secondary and lowly status for non-Europeans.

Britain had disapproved of the coolie trade sufficiently to ban it in India in 1839. Labour recruitment companies therefore turned to China and Singapore.

Southern Chinese had been emigrating for centuries, but without the approval of their own government, and during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) emigration was actually forbidden. But after the Treaty of Nanking local Chinese officials, perhaps fearful of causing further conflict with foreign businessmen, ignored their government's regulations.

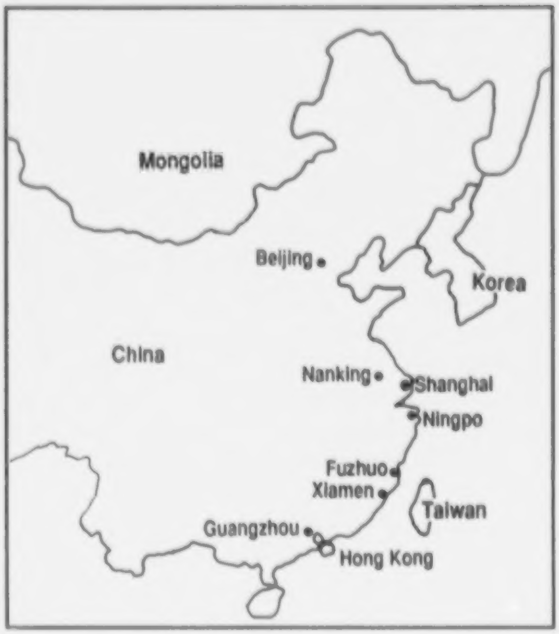
The British government, though officially disapproving of exploitive labour schemes and able to influence its colonies' policies, chose not to interfere on the grounds that there were no laws forbidding private agencies from hiring workers. By 1852 up to 3,000 bonded Chinese labourers had arrived in Australia — most from Xiamen but some from Shanghai and Singapore. They were sponsored in the eastern colonies by settlers and in the west by both settlers and government.[7] Unprotected by China or Britain, they were dependent on their sponsors to honour the terms or their contracts.

Thus, while Britain's relations with China were formal and underlined by treaties, those of her Australian colonies were unofficial, with individual Chinese, not with China. Britain's interest was to buy and sell commodities; Australia's to obtain labourers. In Xiamen, however, the recruitment schemes were described as 'buying men'.

In southern China in the 1840s, peasants whose land holdings were barely enough to support their families suffered severely as inflation caused by the opium trade cut their incomes substantially. Those without land were even worse off. A contract offering four or five years' work overseas seemed to offer poor, able bodied men, a chance at least to survive, and perhaps to better themselves.

But agreements that appeared satisfactory in China were discriminatory in Australian conditions. While the average annual wage for Europeans was £25, the Chinese indentured labourers received £9 to £10, out of which they had to pay their passage and for their food and clothing en route. With limited or no English, and unfamiliar with the British system of employment, they were disadvantaged compared with European workers. But employers anticipated no trouble from labourers expected by everyone to be industrious, subservient and inferior.

The Chinese confounded expectations. Some, while indeed 'persevering and industrious' proved 'equally intelligent and hardy ... equal in attention and superior in willingness and steadiness' to European workers; some quickly demanded the same money and conditions as Europeans; others absconded because of poor pay and ill-treatment. Some died in harsh conditions; some becoming ill, were repatriated at government expense. Some served out their contracts and returned home; others decided to stay. The indentured workers did not fit the stereotype of inferior, subservient labour, but were too few to dispel it, and their limited impact was overwhelmed in the eastern colonies by the tumultuous changes brought by the gold rushes.



The gold discoveries of the 1850s marked the second phase of systematic Sino-Australian contact, as Chinese joined the rush of immigrants who increased Victoria's population almost seven-fold between 1851 and 1861.

Immigrants of this period differed from those of earlier times in that most came independently of government assistance and they were relatively cosmopolitan — by the end of the 1850s, 10 percent of Victoria's population was born in non-British countries and included Negro and European Americans, Chinese, Italians, Germans, Maoris and Melanesians.[8] Goldfields Chinese were neither sought nor sponsored by Europeans and did not come to work for them, but for themselves or compatriots, in a society leavened by non-British migration.

Most came from areas near Guangzhou in Guangdong Province and represented a cross-section of village life — farmers, artisans, doctors, merchants. About 30 percent paid their own fares outright; the others raised the money by mortgaging property or by indenturing themselves to Chinese mining entrepreneurs.[9]

They were glad to come. Inflation and unemployment resulting from the opium trade, the importation of foreign goods and the relocation of industry to Shanghai had led to sometimes violent social unrest in Guangdong. The unemployed turned to crime; militia men turned to banditry; clans fought over ownership of scarce farmland; and there were anti-government uprisings.

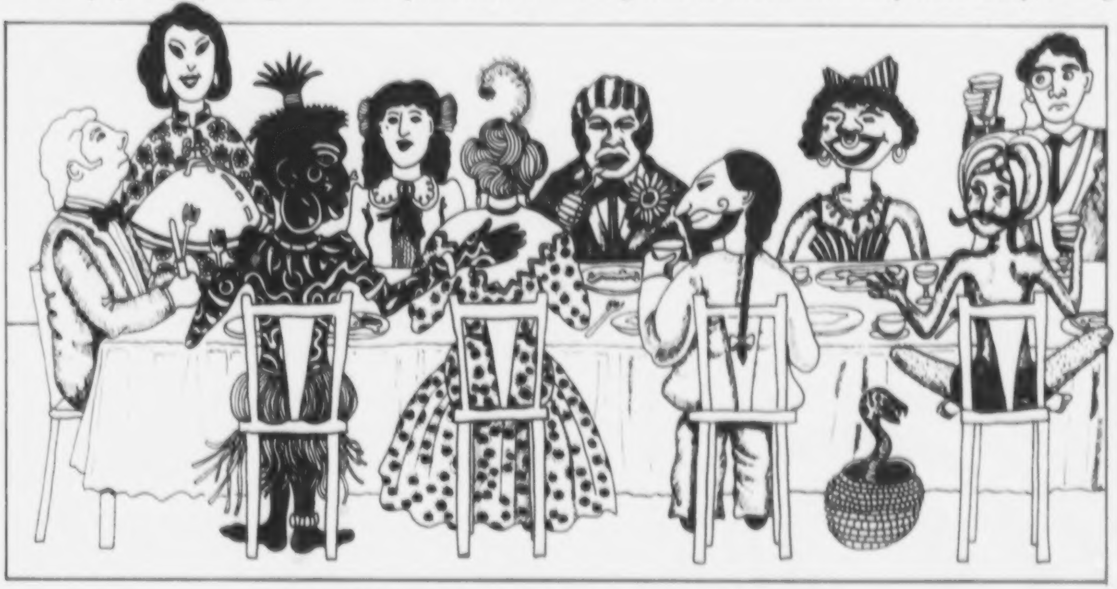
In these hard, turbulent times, gold mining offered prospects of prosperity, as Lum Kheng Yang, from a village south-west of Guangzhou explained :

'Our money and property were plundered ... there appeared no way we could extricate ourselves from poverty ... We happily heard intelligence regarding a new goldfield in an English colony ... men from all parts of the world were congregated there and obtained permission to dig for gold ... the people were peaceably disposed ... I then made an effort to get as much money as would pay my passage to this productive country.'[10] Most Chinese hoped to win enough gold to augment their families' economic and social status, then return home. They came as sojourners, not settlers, so few women migrated. The focus of all endeavour was the family in China and gold seekers saw themselves as representatives of their family or clan, which had usually helped raise the money to send them abroad.

All-male groups, often from the same village or region, travelled together, supporting each other in the triple burden of keeping themselves on the goldfields, paying off their fares and sending money home to meet family expenses. Their view of migration contrasted with that of Europeans, who tended to come as individuals and, while no doubt hoping to strike it rich and return home, could more easily decide to stay and bring their families to join them.

The first Chinese to arrive in Melbourne aroused intense curiosity. Crowds gathered at their camp on the banks of the Yarra and the Chinese submitted to the scrutiny with cheerful equanimity, some enterprising souls among them even attempting to sell small items, such as jars of ginger, to the cautious onlookers.[11]

With their long plaits, non-European features and disciplined way of setting up camp, the Chinese seemed conspicuously different. While others trudged to the diggings, packs on backs, trundling wheelbarrows or, if they were lucky, riding



What would happen if the 'white Australia' policy was abandoned?

on horseback or atop a dray, groups of Chinese, clad in loose blue trousers, wide, smock-like shirts and cloth shoes, made their way in single file, their goods in baskets hung on carrying poles.[12]

Their work methods were also distinctive. They often operated in large groups rather than twos or threes, used water continuously rather than stockpiling washdirt to be rinsed every few days, and were prepared to assiduously work over used ground to collect every last speck of gold.[13]

On the diggings, the Chinese formed fairly self-sufficient communities, with their own stores, pharmacies, temples, gambling and opium dens, tailors' shops and theatres. By 1854 the Kong Chew and See Yup Societies had been founded, as mutual aid organisations for people from areas south of Guangzhou. Other regional organisations were established later and there were branches of secret societies.

All helped emigrants adapt to new conditions. The See Yup Society met new arrivals, helped its members get around the gold fields, assisted those in legal trouble, arbitrated disputes between members and arranged passages home. It tried to minimise friction with non-Chinese by explaining mining regulations, encouraging the wearing of western dress and laying down rules for behaviour in the event of clashes or disagreements with Europeans.

Other nationalities on the goldfields also often grouped together — Americans, Irish, Germans, Scots, Italians and Cornishmen had their own camps, sharing language and customs. But they were not as self-sufficient and self-contained as the Chinese and all, including non-Europeans such as Negroes and Maoris, wore European dress and used European work methods. Besides, other non-Europeans were comparatively few in number.

Many Chinese were prepared to adapt — some wore European clothes, a few became Christians, others took up European pastimes, playing billiards 'with all the gusto of a London roue' [14] and celebrating special occasions with champagne,[15] while some Europeans in turn attended Chinese theatres, gambling houses and New Year festivities.[16] But, secure in their own traditions, the Chinese assumed equality and, while adapting to some extent, saw no need to conform. On the diggings they often presented an alternative style of life and thus challenged European hegemony.

Chinese arrivals increased as average earnings for European miners fell from £780 per year in 1852 to £284 in 1854. As earnings declined, miners took out their frustrations on the distinctive Chinese, and in 1854, at Bendigo, Castlemaine and Maryborough, there were violent incidents and demands that Chinese immigration be stopped or restricted. In an echo from the 1840s, it was claimed 'Chinamen will lower the cost of labour' and present 'unfair competition'.

As Chinese numbers rose from 2,341 in 1854 to about 17,000 in mid-1855, other 'decidedly unfriendly' opinions were voiced. They were 'a Pagan and inferior race', who, without their wives and families, were 'immoral'. Moreover, they were not conforming to the western view of their place in society: 'Nor is the economical argument of their utility as servants available, as they all seem to proceed to the mines ...' And there was fear: '... a comparative handful of colonists may be buried in a countless throng of Chinamen'.[17]

At first, colonial authorities and liberal minded colonists stressed the Chinese right to join other immigrants but as numbers increased and mounting friction was reported, authorities, fearing their inability to police the goldfields, moved to check Chinese immigration.

In June, 1855, the Victorian government passed laws restricting Chinese entry to one person per 10 tons of shipping, imposed a poll tax of £10 on every arrival and a yearly protection tax of £1 which would pay for special officials to separate the Chinese from other miners on the goldfields and oversee their affairs. The legislation was discriminatory, singling out Chinese and making them the most heavily taxed group in the colony.

The restrictions were ineffective as South Australia and New South Wales did not pass similar legislation and Chinese simply walked to Victoria from neighbouring colonies. The 1857 census counted 25,424 Chinese in Victoria, 6.2 percent of the total population but unofficial estimates put the number as high as 40,000 and to an observer the Chinese, concentrated on the goldfields, seemed more numerous than they really were.[18] Meanwhile, the average annual returns of European miners plummeted in one year from £156 in 1856 to £108.[19]

The Chinese, 'unchangeably foreign', were seen as outsiders competing for a resource 'rightfully' belonging to Europeans. Their very presence was resented, their successes even more resented, and the resentment fuelled further charges of differences, real and imagined. They were accused of unhygienic living and causing disease, practising homosexuality and seducing young girls, and of gambling — in short of being a danger to health and morals as well as depriving European diggers of their livelihoods.

Contrary to Lum Kheng Yang's expectations, not all diggers 'were peaceably disposed'. After violent incidents against Chinese on many fields in 1857, in July, at Buckland, the Chinese, in the majority and working successfully as deep miners in the European style, were driven from the field with loss of life and property, prompting South Australia to pass restrictive legislation.

Friction continued both in Victoria and New South Wales where, in 1861, a riot at Lambing Flat resulted in hundreds of Chinese being injured and caused the government to restrict Chinese immigration. In Victoria and New South Wales, the goldfield states, while only a small number of miners were violent, most were not willing to tolerate in their midst a minority of non-Europeans who were not prepared to conform to a western world view and who competed with Europeans. In Western Australia, however, indentured workers were still eagerly sought to alleviate the labour shortage.

Chinese were rarely aggressors on the goldfields. Although on occasions they defended themselves vigorously, they usually offered little resistance to attack and looked to the authorities for protection. Their peaceable behaviour no doubt lessened bloodshed.

They did protest at perceived injustice, however, and made their views known by giving evidence at government enquiries and presenting petitions. They explained why their womenfolk remained at home — apart from all effort being directed to the well-being of the family at home, few could afford to bring them — and maintained that they were, on the whole, poorly off, and struggling like other miners, to make a living on the goldfields.

Perhaps because of the tradition of their own government, which never conceded equality to foreigners and severely restricted the areas in which they could live in China, the Chinese did not ask for parity with British subjects but requested to be placed on the same footing as other 'foreigners'.

When the protection tax was increased to £6 in 1857, they petitioned parliament, the Queen and the Emperor of China and in 1859, led by the See Yup Society, thousands demonstrated against the tax and volunteered for arrest. Two thousand were gaoled and over four thousand fined for tax evasion before Melbourne merchants, pressured by the government, ended one of the biggest protest movements on the Australian goldfields.[20]

At the same time, Lowe Kong Meng, a community leader, brought a test case before the courts, arguing that, as he was born in the British colony of Penang to naturalised British parents, he was not eligible to pay the tax. The magistrate ruled that he was a Chinese because he looked like one, indicating that in Australia, racial characteristics rather than place of birth or documentation could determine identity and status.[21]

By the mid 1860s alluvial gold became harder to find, mining companies replaced individual miners and, in the face of hostility, violence and the difficulty of finding work outside the goldfields, many Chinese went home.

As their numbers declined they were no longer considered a threat and, by 1867, all colonies had removed their restrictive laws. But the issues raised by the presence of independent Chinese workers would influence Australia-China relations for the next hundred years.

While the eastern colonies of British Australia were restricting Chinese immigrants, the Chinese government found itself unable to restrict the British, who had once again gone to war to open up more ports to foreign trade and made it possible for other countries to participate in the conditions they had forced on the Chinese. By the 1860s foreign diplomats resided in Beijing, foreigners could travel inland in China and were subject to their own, not Chinese law. Unable to dictate terms on its own territory, the Chinese government could no longer pretend to be the world's premier power.

In addition, economic conditions steadily worsened. Under the pressure of western trade and internal mismanagement the country was no longer self-sufficient. Silver still flowed out to pay for the opium trade and foreign goods flowed in, increasing inflation and unemployment and by 1865 China had a substantial foreign trade deficit. Internal unrest intensified and from 1850 to 1864 the Taiping Rebellion devastated parts of South and Central China.

In 1859 the governor of Guangdong made voluntary emigration, already a fact, legal and in 1860 the national government formally agreed to labourers being recruited in treaty ports.[22] The Chinese government had been forced to sanction emigration, conditions in China favoured emigration, but emigrants could not expect support abroad from a government pre-occupied by attacks from within and without.

In eastern Australia, most Chinese who remained were alluvial miners in the goldfields areas, tolerated now that Europeans no longer sought this work. Others were hawkers of vegetables, dried fish, tea, and fancy goods or vegetable growers, occupations which required little capital. Some were herbalists, some storekeepers, and some cleared land for farming. There were also a few wealthy merchants.

They earned a living within their own communities or by providing services that Europeans could or would not supply. They lived on the margins of Australian society, and did not compete with Europeans. Those entering European-held occupations, as farmers or businessmen, often did so in areas where there were few Chinese and so were not considered a threat.

In fact, successful Chinese, such as John Egge, a pioneer of the inland river trade and Thomas Coto, a farmer near Sale, were generally admired for their competence.[23] However, on the whole, the contributions of Chinese to Australia's development — as vegetable growers, hop and tobacco cultivators, and land clearers — were accepted but not given due recognition.

Chinese loading bananas at Mourilyan, Queensland in 1900. The Chinese were pioneers of banana growing in Queensland but later suffered legislative discrimination intended to limit their involvement in the industry.

A minority of Chinese decided to settle in Australia, believing opportunities here were so much better than in China that it was worthwhile to defy the sojourning tradition. Some became naturalised; some sent for wives from China, others married European women.

Goldrush migration had reduced the sexual imbalance in Australia's European population but there were still more males than females and the overwhelmingly male Chinese communities were feared as sexual as well as economic competition. A goldfields ditty summed up the attitude of many British Australians :

Our women will not be allowed
Though love than blood is stronger
To marry Flash John Chinaman
Wait a little longer.

Besides, intermarriage was condemned on racist grounds. 'Whenever the inferior had mingled with the superior the ... inferior had degraded the superior ... mentally, morally and physically.' European women who, marrying Chinese, went against public opinion and expressed their belief in a common humanity, usually faced severe social disapproval, including being disowned by their families.

Those who formed liaisons were accepted even less, the under-aged among them often sharing the fate of fifteen-year-old Sarah Chapman as reported in the *Age* in Melbourne in 1873. 'It was proved that she had been living with a Chinaman in Victoria Parade. Ordered to be imprisoned for one hour and sent to a reformatory for two years.'[24]

While in the capital cities merchants like Louis Ah Mouy and Lowe Kong Meng occupied large houses in affluent suburbs, other Chinese concentrated in certain districts such as South Melbourne, near the See Yup temple and inner city areas, and each goldfields town had a Chinese quarter. Socially, as well as economically, most Chinese and their families lived on the margins of Australian society.[25]

Although in the late 1860s and 1870s antagonisms lulled and Australian Chinese relations seemed to improve, anti-Chinese feelings remained strong among miners, who refused Chinese admittance to sections of some Queensland fields in the late 1860s. Then, after an attempt was made to use Chinese as strikebreakers in Victoria in 1873, miners banned them from union membership and persuaded the government to bar them from working in European-owned mines.

A movement got underway not merely to restrict Chinese from certain areas of Australian life but to exclude them. After Chinese joined in the Queensland rushes in 1876 not only did they face immigration restrictions but, with other Asians and Africans, they were banned from certain fields. In 1878, attempts by a shipping company to employ seamen in Hong Kong at half the Australian wage provoked a seaman's strike and such public indignation that the company backed down. Eastern employers were given notice that cheap Asian labour would not be tolerated but at no stage did Australian unions negotiate with Chinese or seek equal conditions for them.

Chinese were not the only targets of hostility — in 1877 trade unions had campaigned against British assisted migrants who, they feared, would lower wages. But they did not seek to restrict British immigrants as such. In 1879, however, the first Intercolonial Trade Union Congress called for legislation to limit Chinese migration.

Alarmed at the resurgence of anti-Chinese sentiment, three Melbourne residents, Louis Ah Mouy, Lowe Kong Meng and Cheok Hong Cheong, in *The Chinese Question in Australia*, spoke for the Chinese, pointing out that relations with western countries had been forced on China, that British treaties guaranteed Chinese admission to British territories, that Chinese came to Australia 'to work, not to beg or steal' and had been useful, productive residents who would in time adapt to Australian conditions as other immigrants had done.

They asked for reciprocity. 'The great part of the coasting trade of China is transacted by English vessels ... if it be lawful for the Englishman ... to compete with our countrymen in China, it must be equally lawful for the Chinaman ... to compete with Englishmen in Australia.'[26]

But Australians did not want a relationship based on reciprocity but on their own perceived needs which included protection against competition and the maintenance of European supremacy. Claiming that Chinese would not adapt, would compete 'unfairly' and, worst of all, 'entirely

The Chinn family, Weldborough, Tasmania, 1903. Maa Mun Chinn was a leading merchant and community leader in the tin-mining town of Weldborough who, in middle age, brought his wife out from China. All the children were born in Tasmania. When the tin-mining gave out the family settled in Melbourne.

swamp' the colonies, by 1881, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland, had once again restricted Chinese immigration. With Chinese less than 2 percent of the Australian population, they had legislated out of fear — not of what was, but of an imagined possibility.

Meanwhile, in Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, Chinese had been recruited to alleviate labour shortages and to take on work Europeans did not want. From 1876 they developed the tin mining industry in Tasmania,[27] worked in the pearling and pastoral industries in Western Australia and, six years after they had been brought to the Northern Territory as indentured labourers in 1874, dominated its economy.[28]

At the same time they were successfully entering the furniture manufacturing trade in New South Wales and Victoria. Their success caused alarm that they might 'take over' and by 1888, the Centennial Year, all Australian colonies had restricted Chinese immigration.

With both workers and small businessmen opposed to Chinese competition in any form and employers forced to give up the idea of using cheap Asian labour, conditions were right for the emergence of a nationally supported 'white Australia' policy for which the Chinese presence had been the major catalyst.

Rationalisation for the restriction and exclusion of Chinese was provided both in the popular press and specialist journals. Australia-China relations were influenced by Britain's position as dominant world power and the British world view at the end of the nineteenth century mirrored that of the Chinese emperor a hundred years before this: ('The English Race have become the

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J.W. Wing's furniture factory, Perth, early this century. In spite of hostility from white employers and trade unions that led to legislative discrimination many Chinese succeeded as furniture makers.

greatest and most civilised people that ever the world saw ... the history of England is the history of progress'.[29])

British-Australians argued that the English race had to be protected from contact with an inferior people in the same way that a healthy body had to be protected from disease. Thus non-Europeans, and particularly Chinese, who were perceived as the greatest threat, were portrayed as polluters of the Australian social fabric and, where common humanity was denied, stereotypes, many of them contradictory, abounded.

Despite evidence that Chinese did not necessarily or willingly work for less than Europeans, were prepared to form unions and go on strike, they were still dubbed 'cheap labour'. Poor Chinese were 'subservient'; successful Chinese were 'arrogant'. National and international campaigns waged by Chinese in Australia to have opium banned were ignored by governments but Chinese were still accused of opium trafficking — in a country where laudanum and alcohol were widely abused.

Findings of government enquiries that there was '... no ground for suspicion that our alien population is now a danger to youthful virtue' did not hush accusations of Chinese immorality in towns and cities with flourishing red light districts. And while newspapers bewailed that 'boys of tender age carry their betting books' and 'clerks pledge their future salary' it was the Chinese who were accused of gambling.[30]

Some Australians opposed discrimination against Chinese. An advertisement for E. W. Cole's booklets *White Australia Unfair and Impossible* and *Humanity* probably summed up their ideas '... all mankind are one family and are placed upon this earth for the purpose of wisely, humanely and progressively governing it, and to live in peace, unity and human brotherhood ...' But only a minority of Christians and liberals held such views.[31]

In the 1880s Chinese and Australians of Chinese descent faced occupational bans and restrictions and loss of citizenship rights.

In the 1890s discriminatory measures were increased and extended to other non-Europeans. They included restrictions on working in the furniture trade and bans on holding a gold-buyer's licence or liquor permit in Victoria; bans on becoming employers in the pearling industry in Western Australia; special taxes and bans on the use of municipal facilities such as public baths, in Queensland and Western Australia; and bans on membership of the Australian Workers Union nationwide.[32]

These measures culminated in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which brought non-European migration to Australia virtually to an end, and the *Nationality Act 1903* which barred non-Europeans from citizenship.

When, after 1905, wives and dependants of non-residents were permitted to enter Australia for limited periods only, it was expected that the Asian segment of the population would decline and that the new Australian nation would become a British outpost on the edge of Asia.

The policy was effective. Between 1901 and 1947 the Chinese population of Australia fell from 29,627 to 9,144, of whom only some 3,700 were Australian born.

For Chinese settlers and their families the 'white Australia' policy meant living in the shadow of a national policy of institutionalised racism which marked them as different from the majority of their fellow citizens. For potential sojourners in China it meant that an avenue of providing for their families had been closed at a time when it was sorely needed, for as economic and social conditions deteriorated, and extended families and clans could no longer look after their needy members, working abroad became a matter of survival for more and more Chinese.

Money earned overseas played an important role in China, firstly in the economy of individual families and the regions they lived in. A letter written in 1892 by the brother of a storekeeper in Tasmania indicates how Australian earnings were used in a See Yup village:

'Regarding the piece of land to build a house ... each block will probably get between two-hundred-and-forty to two-hundred-and-fifty dollars ... quickly arrange to send money back so that I can tender... of the money I brought home, one lot was used to hold in pawn the rice farm of Gong Chiong. This amounted to 162 taels (tael equals one ounce). The second lot ... to hold in pawn the farm of Ch'ai Eng ... 60 taels. Then the third lot was for the farms of Ch'oy Yong and Yee Loon. At present there is no money left. Since the family expenditure is very high, when you receive this letter, quickly send a few hundred so that this can be used to tender for the land and also for home expenditure ... '

The well-to-do storekeeper was keeping both his nuclear family of wife and children in Australia and members of the extended family in China.

Family honour was also important:

'At present in our clan there are a lot of people coming back from San Francisco very successful. There is Uncle Gai Lam ... with over 10,000 taels of silver and Uncle Fong Lam also has about 10,000 ... We didn't expect that the money sent to us would be not even a few hundred ... please make a resolution that in future days you will be better than the others.'[33]

The writer concluded that, if his brother came back to China poor, '... you will feel very ashamed'. Family expectations and pressure motivated most Chinese to work hard in Australia. Remittances from abroad were also a source of national revenue, helping offset the trade imbalance. In 1895 they amounted to roughly 11 percent of money imported into the country.

Hoping to better their lot in turbulent times Chinese men were willing to go abroad, usually to join or replace kinsmen and, in the face of Australian restrictions, they were prepared to smuggle themselves in or participate in well-organised rackets in naturalisation papers. In the 1880s, there was a marked correlation between those naturalised one year and arrivals the next, as the following table[34] shows:

	Naturalised	*Immigrants*
1883	519	443
1884	501	557
1885	1178	670
1886	173	1108

When in 1888 some Chinese passengers on the ship *Afghan* were found with false papers, the Victorian and New South Wales authorities also refused bona-fide immigrants permission to land, provoking sharp controversy with Chinese residents and a court case contesting their decisions. The incident heightened anti-Chinese feelings in Australia.[35]

Although Australian-Chinese relations in the nineteenth century developed around the question of labour power, the presence of Chinese in Australia also stimulated Australia-China trade. Until 1900 this was largely in Chinese hands and in China's favour. The bulk of colonial external trade was with Britain and the British empire but in Victoria in 1874, 4·7 percent of total imports were tea and silk, presumably from China, just under half of the non-British imports.[36] Perhaps the bulk of Australia's imports from China went to Chinese residents for, as the Chinese population declined they decreased — from 2·26 percent of the total Australian imports to ·72 percent between 1887 and 1901. Tea was the largest item along with rice, clothing and textiles.

Exports to China — of timber, copper, coal, lead and butter — were always less than half a percent of total exports.[37] Australian as well as Chinese merchants were involved in the export trade and, during the economic depression of the 1890s, made enquiries through the Sydney businessman, Mei Quong Tart, about sales of wool.[38]

Trade with China, though slight in overall terms, was sufficient for exporters to worry that Chinese anger at the ill-treatment of some of the *Afghan* passengers in 1888 would result in trade restrictions and for shipowners to fear in 1901 that the Immigration Restriction Act might harm their business.[39] The Chinese community in Australia contained many enterprising businessmen such as Mei Quong Tart in Sydney and Lowe Kong Meng in Melbourne but, by 1900, when Chinese faced occupational bans and loss of citizenship rights, Australia was regarded as a poor business risk. Many Australian-Chinese firms chose to invest in Hong Kong or China.[40]

Chinese knew from returning emigrants that they might meet hostility abroad but were prepared to endure it in order to provide for their families. They hoped their sojourn would not be long and were perhaps aware that Chinese anti-foreign prejudices mirrored those of Europeans.

While English contained the offensive terms 'Chow', 'Chink', 'Chinaman' and the depersonal-

Darwin's Chinatown in 1911.

ising 'John', Chinese had many pejorative terms for foreigners – 'yi' and 'fan' meaning barbarian, 'guei' meaning devil and, for Europeans, 'ang mor', red-head. Going abroad was known as 'guo fan' literally going over to the barbarians,[41] while, until China's defeat by Japan in 1895, the Emperor in official documents referred to the Japanese contemptuously as 'wojen' – dwarves.[42]

Chinese attitudes to intermarriage also paralleled those of Europeans to some extent in that, while children were generally welcomed, their non-Chinese mothers were not — Margaret, the wife of Sydney merchant Mei Quong Tart was received dismissively by her mother-in-law in China in the 1890s.[43]

But Chinese in Australia, like those in the Americas, knew better than their compatriots at home how little China was esteemed in the world, how poorly Chinese were treated in comparison with other people, such as the Japanese, whose government, in the throes of modernisation, spoke up for them, and how far China had to go to catch up with western countries. They had petitioned their central and provincial governments for assistance a number of times — in 1857 on the poll tax; in 1888 during the *Afghan* incident; in 1901 on the Immigration Restriction Act, but to no avail.

With foreign powers encroaching on its territory, social unrest, and debate within its ranks about how to resolve its problems, the Chinese government had little time for '... a few stragglers' who had emigrated from southern provinces. Chinese in Australia, like others abroad, began to think beyond the problems of their families and villages. They slowly developed a national consciousness and supported political reform in China believing that a strong government would improve the position of Chinese everywhere.

While Chinese abroad feared for the future of China, the newly independent Australia, far from Britain, the mother country, was also fearful — of the Japanese 'a people who are clever and warlike', and of 'the wakening of the sleeping giant, China'.

Politicians urged Australians to 'populate or perish' from an invasion by 'the yellow peril'[44] and, faced with a declining birthrate, sought immigrants from Britain to bolster numbers, while embarking, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, on a campaign to persuade European-Australian women to bear more children and care better for their youngsters. The establishment of baby clinics and infant welfare centres was part of this campaign.[45]

At the same time, discriminatory measures continued against Chinese in Australia, some of them successfully fought off by Chinese and sympathetic British-Australians including members of Protestant churches and liberal minded businessmen. The attacks had the effect of reinforcing immigrants and Australians born of immigrant parents in their Chinese identity, building community spirit and fostering links with China.[46]

Australia's Chinese welcomed the republican government of China in 1912 and in 1916 branches of the Chinese Nationalist League (later the Chinese Nationalist Party) were formed throughout Australia. The Party encouraged investment in China and the spread of Chinese education abroad. Some Australian Chinese went to study in China and increasing numbers visited their parents' villages and Hong Kong. Their interest, however, was not shared by the bulk of Australians.[47]

To most British-Australians, China, apart from being the homeland of a large population which could 'swamp' Australia, was fairly remote. In the nineteenth century newspapers had regularly reported on aspects of Chinese affairs — incidents in the Taiping Rebellion, China's dealings with foreign powers, the establishment of railways and the condition of the army. Chinese customs, however, were often presented dismissively — the country was 'a paradise of competitive examinations, embodied unnaturalness and absolute subserviency to the powers that be' and Chinese music was 'an incessant noise'.[48]

Wealthy Australians who visited China spent their time within European communities, far removed from the world of most Chinese.[49] Other travellers, such as missionaries, often described China as an exotic, backward and barbarous country — and indeed in some parts of the country Europeans were received with as much hostility as Chinese had been on the goldfields. Australian Christians donated money to the 'civilising' efforts of missionaries and to famine relief in China.[50]

Efforts by local Chinese to present another

Doris and Hedley Tong Way, Ballarat, 1916. Despite regulations restricting armed service to people of 'substantially European descent', Australians of Chinese background enlisted and served in the forces.

perspective—such as China's cultural achievements — had little impact and, in the twentieth century, as war and natural disasters prevailed, Australians' Eurocentric and essentially racist view of China was reinforced — in 1939 the *Argus* described residents of the city of Shanghai as 'natives'.[51]

However, from the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, a small minority of Australians joined with the Chinese community in protesting against the Japanese military invasion, seeing China's struggles in an international context, as part of worldwide resistance to fascism. Among them were members of the Waterside Workers' Federation who refused to load pig iron bound for Japan in case it contributed to the war effort. The government used legislation to force them back to work, earning the Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, the nickname which dogged him all his life, 'Pig Iron Bob'.

Some Australians — both of Chinese and European descent — went to China as teachers and missionaries. Although most English speaking missionaries were British and American and the impact of the Christian religion was slight, Australian Christians introduced some Chinese to Western concepts of science, medicine and education and so contributed in a small way to the modernisation of China.[52]

Australian experience also contributed to the development of Chinese commercial expertise. Chinese in Australia learned modern business methods and, by 1912, Australian - Chinese merchants had established in Hong Kong three successful department stores which eventually became transnational companies. Smaller entrepreneurs pioneered the importation of Australian ham and biscuits to China and Hong Kong and opened factories and cinemas as well as more traditional businesses such as restaurants and import-export companies.[53]

The most enterprising attempt to promote Australia-China trade came from Chinese merchants in Australia who, in 1917, established a shipping company to overcome the shortage of vessels caused by the 1914-18 War. Although the company failed in 1924, partly because powerful British and Japanese companies undercut its prices, it was a remarkable initiative.[54]

After Federation both Commonwealth and State governments encouraged trade with China, even appointing trade commissioners, but the volume of business remained minute comprising ·46 percent of imports and ·49 percent of exports in 1925 and was far exceeded by trade with Japan.[55]

Up to the 1920s, half the export trade of wheat, leather, sandalwood and dairy products was in the hands of Australians while importers, chiefly of tea and edible nuts, remained Chinese. By the mid-1930s exports were increasing but with the outbreak of war in 1939 trade almost ceased.

By the late 1930s, Australia-China relations were slight. Australians held attitudes generated in the goldrush days while Chinese attitudes were influenced by the sojourning tradition of migration and Australia's restrictive immigration laws. Within the next ten years the Second World War and the foundation of the People's Republic of China would bring significant change.

During the Second World War, the long feared invasion from Asia became a possibility for Australians. Chinese, perceived since the 1850s as a threat to Australia, were now valued allies. Young Australians of Chinese descent enlisted willingly in the armed forces; Australian troops fighting in Asia appreciated the support of Chinese and other Asians who worked in the anti-Japanese resistance; Chinese refugees from the war in the Pacific were given asylum in Australia and worked for the war effort here.

A consul from China had been appointed to Australia in 1909 but until 1941 Britain had attended to major diplomatic relations. From 1941, however, Australia and China exchanged legations. The Australian media portrayed the Chinese people as brave, even heroic and many Australians looked at China and Chinese with new eyes.[56]

The end of the war also signalled the break-up of European empires, forcing a re-evaluation of the European world view. The major power in the Pacific and Australia's most powerful ally was now not Britain but the USA.

Worsening relations between the USA and capitalist countries of western Europe and the USSR and its allies seriously affected Australia-China relations after the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Australia and China were opponents in the Korean War of 1950, Australia followed the policy of containing communism in Asia and, like the USA, did not establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic. Once again, China was perceived as a threat, ideologically and militarily.

At the same time, changes occurred in Australia-China migration, the foundation of the first systematic Australian-Chinese contacts. The communist government's land reform program, which abolished large private holdings and confiscated the land of overseas Chinese, ended the sojourner system of migration. When property owners could be accused of 'exploitation' and Chinese abroad were asked to pay 'fines' to prevent relatives from being punished for 'class crimes' many emigrants, favouring the private enterprise system, decided to stay abroad and bring their families to join them.

Because of Australian perceptions of Chinese in their midst as wartime allies and believers in free enterprise and because of the need not to offend new Asian allies, immigration and nationality laws were applied more leniently. In 1949 Chinese war-time refugees were allowed to stay; in 1956 Chinese could obtain citizenship after 15 years residence; churchmen, academics and professionals agitated for immigration reform; the Australian Labor Party abolished the 'white Australia' plank in its policy and restrictions were gradually eased. By the mid 1960s a wide range of professionals and semi-professionals of Chinese background had settled in Australia.

By 1966 there were 23,281 Chinese in Australia — a third of them overseas students. Well-educated and affluent, they mixed easily with Australians and made Asia seem neither alien nor threatening. In addition, for the first time in Australia's history, the majority of immigrants were non-British, many of them from the Mediterranean. The 'face' of Australia was changing and Chinese stood out less than before.

At the same time, increasing numbers of Australians born of Chinese parents were entering a wide range of jobs from the trades to the professions and settling in the suburbs of capital cities.[57] The old Chinese quarters became service centres rather than residential areas. Chinese began to move from the margins of Australian society into the mainstream. One of the first to enter public life was Harry Chan who, in 1966, became mayor of Darwin.

Although by the late 1950s trade with Britain was still substantial Australia dealt increasingly with Japan. China, though taking less than 2 percent of our exports and despite being a 'red' threat, was seen as a possible market for primary products.[58] Ten years later there had been a dramatic change — Japan took more exports than any other country, ahead of the USA and Britain and was the third largest supplier of imports. By the mid 1960s, China bought a third of our wheat and a substantial amount of wool, and as political differences developed within the communist bloc, looked to non-communist countries for trade.[59]

As the population and trade and defence relations changed, more Australians felt comfortable about being part of Asia, and had no wish to be seen as unfriendly protagonists there. The Whitlam Government, elected in 1972, reflected and developed this mood. It withdrew Australian troops from Vietnam, established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and, in 1973, abolished restrictive immigration legislation. Internally and externally, this was a turning point in Australia-China relations.

The first Australian trade mission to visit China, after diplomatic relations were established, sought to promote two-way trade. Finding that China's ultimate aim was a self-sufficient economy and that joint ventures were not favoured, the mission stated that both countries needed to understand each other's business practices and called for Australia to train bi-lingual professionals in order to achieve this. Its recognition that Australians and Chinese had to learn from each other reflected a change in the balance of power in Asia which would become increasingly evident in Australia's trade relations.[60]

By the mid 1980s, Japan was Australia's most important trading partner and China our fourth largest export market. Chinese influences on the Australian economy have come from many directions. While trade with China increased thirteenfold between 1972 and 1985, the volume of trade with Taiwan doubled that with China and business men of Chinese descent from Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia had been investing in Australia

China's attitude to trade had changed since 1973. Joint ventures were now encouraged, more than twenty being established between 1982 and 1985,[61] varying in size from substantial (the Chinese government's 10 percent equity in an aluminium smelter at Portland, Victoria) to modest (the New South Wales government's assistance in establishing a cattle herd in Hainan).

Legal exchange programs emphasising trade and business law began in 1985, Chinese and Australian regions and cities established 'sisterly' relationships and both Australian and Chinese leaders spoke of closer integration of the two economies.[62] Australia-China relations were now based firmly on trade and perceived mutual needs.

The trade balance runs strongly in Australia's favour but is equalised somewhat by the foreign exchange brought to China by Australian tourists — the third biggest group of visitors after Japanese and Americans.[63] Cultural exchanges have also accompanied the expansion of trade. Some thousands of Chinese students come to study in Australia each year and some Australian students study in China, about 50 were there in 1986. There has also been increasing contact between professionals and artists.

Within Australia there were more people of Chinese descent than ever before, approximately 100,000 in 1981 in a population of 14,576,330.[64] Most had not migrated from China but from other countries of Asia and many, including two of the biggest groups, those from Indochina and Malaysia, have sought in Australia a refuge from discrimination in their countries of origin.

In 1987 there were more than 90 Chinese community organisations, including the Kong Chew and See Yup Societies, probably the oldest existing ethnic organisations in Australia. While most still share the traditional Chinese concerns for the social and cultural welfare of their members, they also cater for educational, sporting and professional interests. Chinese-Australians now participate at all levels of society, from factory floor to corporation boardroom, and Australians of many backgrounds have become increasingly interested in and familiar with aspects of Chinese culture — art, self-defence, medicine, music and food.

Old fears still exist, however. During 1984-6, in a debate well covered in the media, opponents of Asian migration charged that Australia was being 'invaded' and that Asians took jobs and housing from 'real' Australians.

But today, major political parties and a broad range of institutions from trade unions to ministries of arts and education support a policy of multiculturalism, whereby Australians of many backgrounds have the right to maintain and develop the culture they brought from their country of origin while participating freely in Australian

Young watcher, old warrior. Taken during the Entombed Warriors exhibition while it was on loan from China to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1982/83.

society and contributing to an integrated Australian culture.

Increasing numbers of Australians are now prepared to recognise and value cultural diversity and while prejudice against Chinese and other minorities still exists, so too do Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Boards, whose job it is to help prevent discrimination.

Though Australians increasingly see themselves as part of the Asian-Pacific region, they have been slow to act on their perceptions. Very few speak Asian languages or understand Asian cultures.

Gough Whitlam, in 1987 Chairman of the Australia-China Council, expressed alarm that, fourteen years after establishing diplomatic relations with China, Australia did not have a pool of bi-lingual professionals and lacked the communication skills to deal successfully with the Chinese. Moreover, as China becomes self sufficient in grain and develops manufacturing industries, Australia will have to find new skills and products to offer. He warned against relying on a 'special relationship' with China and becoming a partner in China's development.

'The type of comprador status that some Australian governments found attractive in successive relationships with the United Kingdom and United States has never been more moribund. The international community is now so fluid that it is no longer feasible for any nation to plan its future and promote its interests around a relationship of dependence with any other nation.

There is no region in the world and no market in any nation which Australia can afford to ignore.'[65] Australians, who have traditionally protected themselves from competition, will have to become both competitive and adaptable in order to survive in a dynamic, changing region, where the developed nations of Asia, Europe and the Americas will all vie to trade with a developing China.

By 1988, relations between Australia and China had never been so warm and with leaders on both sides expressing hopes for closer ties goodwill could hardly have been greater. In mid-1989, however, the relationship cooled. Australians were horrified when, in June 1989, the Chinese government ordered troops to fire on unarmed demonstrators in Tien An Men Square, Beijing. Expressions of concern by the Australian government were considered by the Chinese authorities to be interference in their internal affairs. The number of Australian tourists to China declined and businessmen drew back to assess whether changes in Chinese leadership would affect trade and investment.

Tim Loh, who trained as a surgeon in Australia and Britain, and as an acupuncturist in China. Acupuncture is now part of mainstream medicine in Australia.

A little later in the year it was estimated that over 30 percent of Chinese students studying English in Australia were staying on after their visas had expired. The Australian government, alarmed that study was being used as a means of illegal migration, altered the regulations related to student entry and made the changes retrospective. This caused angry protests from potential students in China who lost their long awaited chance to go abroad despite the fact that they had already paid their fees.

Yet business, cultural and government contact continued if on a lower key. Australia and China have much in common. Both countries are attempting to restructure their economies and take an internationalist stand in a competitive world. In this difficult and uncertain process neither threatens the other and both hope trade relations will make the transition easier. Developing and extending a relationship with China based on goodwill and mutual interest will be one of the challenges Australians face as they move into the 21st century.

This essay has drawn largely on four sources to all of which a general debt is acknowledged: Choi, C.Y. 1975, *Chinese migration and settlement in Australia*, Sydney University Press; Cronin, K. 1982, *Colonial casualties*, Melbourne University Press; Hsu, I. 1975, *The rise of modern China*, Oxford University Press; and Markus, A. 1979, *Fear and hatred*, Hale and Iremonger. Other sources drawn upon are noted as follows.

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CHANGING BALANCES JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA

Gavan McCormack

The partners to the Australia-Japan relationship, whether as countries or as cultures, are a somewhat unlikely match: the narrow arc of mountainous, monsoonal islands in the North-West Pacific and the large, flat, dry continent in the South; the Asian Confucian, 'group-oriented', hard-working, industrial superpower, and the multicultural (though once Anglo-Celtic), individualist, leisure-oriented, declining industrial nation.

The contrasts are real and large — although almost all the above need qualification — but there is also a sense in which the countries have in the modern period pursued parallel destinies, and there is no doubt that those destinies are increasingly intertwined. The relationship has been marked by massive ignorance, hostility, and prejudice at times in the past, each at times perceiving the other to be utterly alien.

As of 1990, Japan and Australia are 'closer' than ever before, linked by an increasingly complex web of connections, but the present relationship remains qualified by the circumstances from which it has evolved.

While there has been a revolution in Australian perceptions of Japan unprecedented in relations with any other country, and while the Australian image in Japan is largely positive, it would be an exaggeration to say that the two countries were really close in the sense that their people had a great mutual admiration or affection for each other, or even that they made great efforts to understand each other.

But while the levels of mutual understanding in the 1980s leave much to be desired, it is nevertheless true that there are today a significant number of Australians and Japanese who have entered into deep contacts with the other society, to the extent that 'otherness' dissolves and nationality becomes irrelevant. It is in the cross-fertilization resulting from the contacts of thousands of ordinary people from both societies and in the new understandings that result, from both one's 'own' and the 'other' society, that the best assurance for the future lies.

The question of what Australia and Japan have in common varies greatly depending on the perspective from which it is approached. A Japanese Ainu aboriginal might find a great deal in common with an Aboriginal Australian, both marginalised and pushed back from their hunting and fishing preserves by invading waves of agriculturalists with superior weapons; but these groups of Australians and Japanese have had little if any contact.

It goes without saying that the years of war between Australia and Japan mark the great divide in the relationship. As a child entering primary school in 1942 I was just old enough to have experienced the fear and uncertainty that gripped Australia then. Crouched under an old wooden school desk, or in muddy trenches in the school grounds, for air raid drills, our minds filled with images of monsters and of the unspeakable evil we then believed Japan represented. Many years later it came as somewhat of a shock to discover that the Japanese premier of that time, General Tojo, and the Japanese emperor, were both quite ordinary 'human-looking' people, for the images bred of wartime propaganda were quite different, and horrifying.

Then, few Australians knew Japan at all. The study of Japanese began at the University of Sydney in 1917 and in Melbourne in the 1930s, but only a handful of Australians had been to Japan, much less learned the language, attempted to understand the culture, or formed friendships with Japanese people. Generalised views, formed in the nineteenth century, associated 'Asia', with 'threat', and such views persisted unchallenged long beyond the nineteenth century.

The progressive Australian tradition of protecting and advancing the rights of the working 'man' or the ordinary 'man' was defined in exclusionist terms of 'white' and 'male' prerogatives. Since the alternative, conservative, tradition was interested in possible cheap and exploitable labour from Asia, the gulf between movements, perceptions, and people in Australia and Japan was considerable.

Japanese prostitutes in Broome early this century. In many cases such women were kidnapped from poor families and smuggled overseas by their procurers who sold them to brothels. By 1896 there were some 200 Japanese prostitutes in Australia.

The experiences of the nineteenth century were similar only in the sense that both countries occupied and settled their frontiers and grappled with the problems of industrialising and of unifying their various semi-independent regions — the feudal *han* in Japan and the states in Australia. In nearly every other respect they were profoundly different.

While Australia developed from colonial statehood to federal unity it did so within the framework of the British empire, as a white outpost in the Pacific, its people aliens in their own land and geographic region, contemptuous and brutal towards the Aboriginal inhabitants and looking towards the surrounding Asian region with a fear that in due course led to the proclamation of 'white Australia'. Japan, in the similar period, shaken out of its feudal stability by aggressive and expanding Western imperialism, plunged into a series of reforms that produced a 'modernizing' state run by dynamic young men from its outer regions who packaged their reforms in an imperialist nationalism that succeeded (almost alone in Asia) in preserving Japan intact from Western imperialism.

Nationalism was in both countries an expression of the process of forging unity, out of Japan's feudal domains and Australia's colonial settlements, in both cases to resist what was perceived to be the menace of an unfriendly surrounding environment.

In the nineteenth century contact between the two countries was slight. Till Australian wool exports to Japan began in the 1890s there was little trade, and from the Australian side only a handful of businessmen, journalists and tourists developed any interest in Japan.

There were interesting men (scarcely any women) among them. The early Japan scholar, James Murdoch, was a pioneer of English language journalism in Japan[1] in the early 1870s. Before the construction of the railway, a coach service was run between the foreign settlements of Tokyo and Yokohama by the renowned Australian company, Cobb and Co.[2]

Perhaps most remarkable of all, Henry Black (born in Adelaide in 1858) became a famous Japanese vaudeville, or *rakugo*, artist. With a troupe of six and his Japanese wife, Black, known by his

Japanese name Ishii Burakku or by his stage name of Kairakutei, travelled the country telling stories rendered into Japanese from Dickens or de Maupassant, or historical romances about Joan of Arc or Charles I, or even doing female impersonation roles from Japanese Kabuki. He was a famous man around the turn of the century, recited by invitation for the Crown Prince, and eventually died in 1923.[3]

In Australia, the first Japanese trading company, Kanematsu, set up business in Sydney in 1890, mainly buying wool; otherwise the Japanese presence was very slight, made up of fishermen, especially pearl fishermen, and prostitutes, and both of these groups were scattered through the remote ports and towns of the north and west of the country. The first pearl fishermen were operating in the Darwin and Thursday Island areas from the early 1880s, and by 1901 there were an estimated 130 in the Northern Territory.[4]

In this period when Japan was in the infant stages of industrialisation, and had little to export to the world and little foreign currency to buy what it needed, women constituted an important 'export commodity'.

Throughout the Asian-Pacific region poor Japanese farm women, most of them from the island of Kyushu in southern Japan, were transported, often after being physically abducted, and were exploited mercilessly by groups of male Japanese 'entrepreneurs'. There were five Japanese brothels in Darwin by 1888.[5] In Queensland in 1897 all but one of the 116 Japanese women in the colony (and she the consul's wife) were reckoned to be prostitutes; the pattern was similar in Western Australia and South Australia (which then included the Northern Territory).[6]

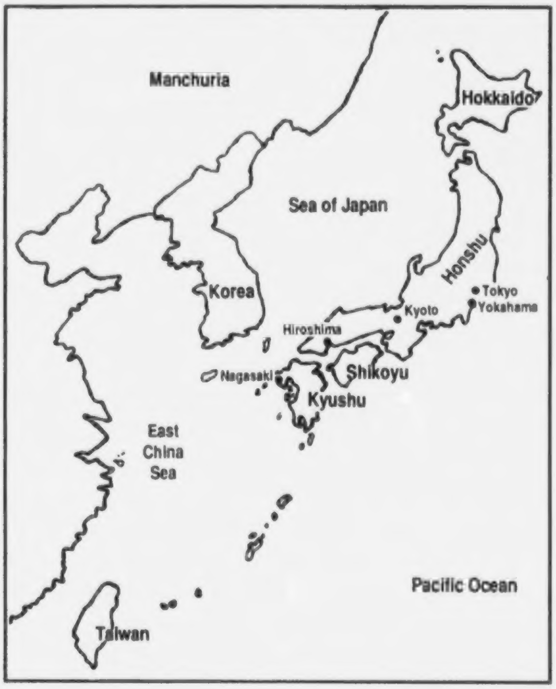
In other words, there were very few Japanese at all in Australia in the nineteenth century, and most of those who were there were from the poorest and most backward parts of the country. Yet both pearling and prostitution were run as efficient businesses. However dismal the trade, the Japanese brothel business was seen to be characterised by 'experienced management' and was renowned for its 'honesty, sobriety and other refined qualities'.[7]

After federation, the adoption of the Immigration Restriction Act (the 'white Australia' policy) led to a steady decline both in the pearling and prostitution business; the Japanese presence shifted from poor country men and women in remote ports and frontier brothels to middle-class men in the city centres, but to very few of them.

Despite the fears in Australia about the 'Yellow Peril' which underlay the adoption of the 'white Australia policy', there was nothing at this time to indicate any serious interest in Japan in migration to Australia. For a time (1902-1921) the quest for security in this hostile environment led Japan into alliance with the then world 'super-power', Britain, so that both Australia, within the empire, and Japan, allied to it, seemed set to develop along harmonious lines. Australian troops sailed for the Turkish and Mediterranean theatres of the First World War under Japanese Navy escort, and the Japanese displacement of German imperialism from the German Pacific islands north of the equator suddenly brought the two nations much closer.

But the two nationalisms were not to be reconciled easily. The great change in East Asian power relationships marked by the Japanese victories over China (1894-5) and Russia (1904-5) created an unease in Australia that was never quelled.

Alfred Deakin, Prime Minister, noted in 1905 that 'Japan at her headquarters is, so to speak, next



door, while the mother country is many streets away'.[8] At Versailles in 1919, William Morris (Billy) Hughes, Prime Minister, was at the forefront of opposition to the Japanese proposal to insert a clause outlawing racial discrimination into the Charter of the League of Nations.

Even the eventually watered-down resolution declaring the 'principle of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals', however anodyne, was fiercely resisted by Australia. Eleven out of the seventeen countries voting on the issue supported the Japanese proposal, but the American president, Woodrow Wilson, ruled that unanimity was necessary and the resolution therefore lost.[9] It took Australia 56 years, till 1975, before racial discrimination was eventually outlawed in the way proposed by Japan in 1919.

Australian nationalism squared the circle of its dependence on its geographically remote patron in Britain by taking a virulently racist and exclusionist form; little attention was paid to the long-term problem of maintaining that stance.

Japanese nationalism too, having renounced its traditional Asian connections as redolent of backwardness and pre-modernity, and meeting incomprehension and rejection from the 'modern' West it aspired to join as an equal, gradually moved into its own racism and super-nationalism.

In short, isolation and insecurity bred pathological political expressions in both Australia and Japan, shifting them from parallel to opposing paths. As Australia (and the West) treated Japan as intrinsically inferior and denied it the possibility of equality, Japan gradually came to adopt the role of autonomous, superior, Asian overlord. It was not only Australian nationalism with which it clashed as a result, but the nationalist aspirations of the whole of Asia, given unintended but irreversible impetus by Japan's actions.

Despite occasional ripples in the relationship, and the constant underlying tension stemming from Australia's avowed racism, the economies of the two countries continued to develop along complementary lines through the early decades of the twentieth century: the food and raw material-producing Australia and the resource dependent and (basically) light manufacturing Japan.

Till the 1930s Japan only accounted for a meagre seven percent of Australia's exports and three percent of its imports, but that figure grew steadily till in 1936, the peak year, the bilateral trade amounted to 10.3 percent of Australia's trade.[10] By that time, Japan was second only to the United Kingdom as customer, and fourth as a source of Australia's imports. Mostly, Japan exported silk and other textile fabrics, such as rayon, and a mixture of light industrial goods — toys, crockery, glassware, fancy goods — while it imported substantial quantities of both wool and wheat from Australia.

However, the trade was not rooted in any bilateral or multilateral treaty understanding. Japan made repeated overtures — in 1911, 1919, 1926 — to establish the trade on such a basis but was repeatedly rebuffed.[11]

For Australia the imperial orientation was crucial, not only in political and cultural terms but economically as well. As the capitalist world shook with the crisis of prolonged depression in the early 1930s, Australia reacted by giving precedence to the obligations of the imperial connection. The Japanese overtures were rebuffed.

In 1936 the restrictions imposed on Japanese imports to Australia excited retaliatory Japanese bans. Though soured by distrust and incomprehension, a sporadic trading relationship continued till the outbreak of war in 1941.

There was little room for compromise between Australia's definition of national interest in British imperial terms and Japan's in terms of its 'New Order' for Asia. Japanese aggression in China and, later, in South-East Asia was seen in Australia as totally unjustified.

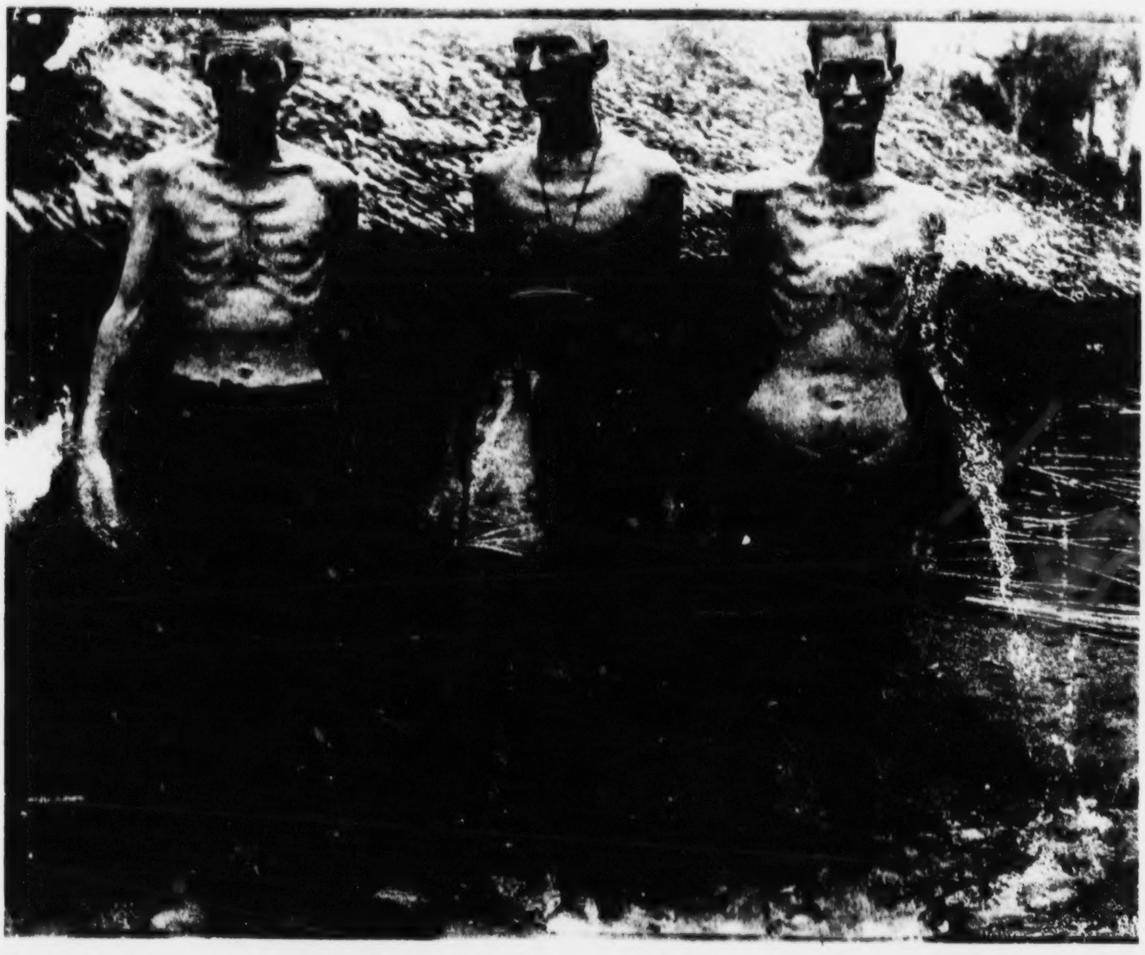
With the passage of time, however, and the cooling of passions stirred by conflict and war, the attitudes of that time appear in a different light. Australia's pre-war fears and fantasies contained much that was neither rational nor justifiable, while Japan's pre-war fear and resentment now has to be seen as grounded in a realistic understanding of a hostile world.

This is not to argue that Japanese aggression was anything but aggression, nor to justify it, but to recognize that among the factors that conditioned Japan to act as it did must be counted the refusal of its neighbours — European and American ('white') nations great and small — to admit the possibility of equal dealings with Japan.

Nowhere was the racist repudiation of Japan stronger than in Australia, even while the profits of the Japan trade were welcomed. If Australia (and other Western countries) would not allow the sort of relationships with Japan on which the reliable supply of materials could be maintained, then Japan had to look elsewhere, to China and South-East Asia to meet its requirements, or abandon the aspiration to become an independent industrial nation.

By 1941, Japan was deeply committed in Manchuria and the rest of China. The Western demand that it unconditionally withdraw was tantamount to a demand that Japan accept subordinate, dependent status, in short that it become like the rest of Asia, where the western powers held sway. No Japanese government, 'militarist' or otherwise, could have bowed to such demands.

The success of Japan's industrialisation had been due, at least in part, to the adoption of military discipline and the accompanying command structure; the military had assumed a leading role in the direction of affairs of state. Faced with surrender or war, they saw no alternative. As the Premier, General Tojo, put it, 'there comes a time in a man's life when it is necessary to jump from the verandah of Kiyomizu temple', Kiyomizu being a famous temple built on a steep Kyoto hillside.[12]



Three Australian prisoners of war at the Shimo Sonkurai No 1 camp. The Japanese considered these men fit for work. The man on the right can't do his shorts up because his stomach is swollen with beri-beri. Ossie Jackson (centre) has wet beri-beri in his legs which are virtually the same circumference from his ankles to his thighs. Benjamin Pearce (left) is also suffering from malnutrition and beri-beri.

Australia entered the war with a view to defending and preserving the status quo of European colonial dominance in Asia from non-European challenge. By the time the war ended, many Australians were to change their minds on this.

During the war Australia came to face direct Japanese aggression against it: a total of 60 bombing raids on Darwin, beginning with that on 19 February 1942 in which 250 people died, submarine missions to Sydney, and even a bizarre secret mission to the North-West shores of Australia (on the Admiralty Gulf) in January 1944 to survey the region as a possible site for a Japanese penal colony.[13] In Singapore on 15 February 1942 13,000 men of the 8th Division surrendered to the Japanese invaders and became prisoners.

For most Australians, the story of the war is the story of heroism, suffering, and comradeship under extreme pressure and unprovoked attack at the hands of an inhumanly cruel regime. Many families in Australia lost a son/father/brother/uncle, had a member who suffered in a Japanese-run Prisoner of-War camp, or generally experienced privations because of the war. Perhaps no experience was so traumatic for Australia as was the endurance of this crisis. The determination, courage and cooperation with which the crisis was met wrote a new chapter in the record of the maturing of the nation.

However, maturity is complex: the power to reflect on the causes of events and (where necessary) to realize one's own mistakes lies at its deepest levels. For Australians to question the nature of participation in the events by which Australian nationhood is defined is not easy.

In the United States, the process of 'revisionism' has been under way in regard to the question of war responsibility for many years. Academic studies that stress the 'legitimate dimension' of Japanese nationalism and which draw attention to the Western determination to block Japan's drive for self-determination as an industrial power have been published and widely read for twenty years; in Australia few of these works are published or generally available, and the issue of the legitimacy of the war has yet to be seriously addressed.

Thus the paradox of the juxtaposition in the minds of many contemporary Australians of two contradictory images: the demonic, brutal, threatening image of Japan at war, and the rich, sophisticated, benign image of today. Without mediation between these two contradictory images, it is difficult to form any coherent picture of Japan or to comprehend the transformations in the relationship between the two countries.

Australian complicity in the general Western racism of the pre-war period has to be faced as one unpalatable but real contributory cause of the war. The adoption of a racist mental framework also influenced the Australian conduct of the war in ways with which few Australians have yet to come to grips.[14]

Anyone who has lived in Japan for long enough periods in the post-war era will have been struck by the number of middle-aged Japanese who speak of their war-time recollections of service on the Pacific or South-East fronts and of the common belief then that Australian soldiers were exceptionally brutal, that capture by them meant almost certain death.

In his recent, highly praised study of war-time attitudes, John Dower notes that 'The reputation of not taking prisoners also became associated with Australian troops in general. In many instances, Japanese who did become prisoners were killed on the spot or *en route* to the prisoner compounds.'[15]

Trying to surrender, especially on a battlefield, is notoriously difficult and hazardous. Some Japanese were certainly killed in the process. The switch from trying to kill the enemy to being bound to protect him and respect his rights calls for a discipline and calm that are at a premium in the heat of war. Some Japanese were certainly fired on when trying to surrender, and some were killed after surrender.[16]

The Australian journalist, Denis Warner describes, without comment, an incident he observed on Bougainville where a group of Japanese who had surrendered were ordered to be shot by a major-general, although in this case the officer and the unit concerned were American.[17]

Many Japanese died after the end of the war in August 1945; 2,400 out of 29,500 on Borneo, 2,400 out of 33,000 in New Guinea, and 4,500 out of 96,000 in the Bismarcks, according to Japanese estimates.[18] But, given that malnutrition and disease were rampant, that battle wounds were not

Among the 4,000 Japanese civilians interned in Australia during the second world war were about 500 of Formosan (Taiwanese) origin arrested by the Dutch in Indonesia because Formosa was a Japanese colony. This photograph shows a group of them awaiting repatriation in 1946. The reason for their distress was that they at first understood they were being sent to Japan.

uncommon, and that many Japanese were determined never to surrender, the numbers of those actually killed upon or after surrender cannot have been very great, certainly not of the order suggested by one recent account which referred to 'only a few hundred' survivors out of '21,000 Japanese who surrendered to Australian troops in North Borneo'.[19] But just how great the numbers were will probably never be known, and the subject has yet to be thoroughly studied.

Certainly the racist attitudes embedded in Australian society did not dispose Australian troops to careful observance of the 'rules of war', particularly when they heard their enemy described from the highest level as 'apes', 'vermin' or even 'things' (by General Sir Thomas Blamey, who spoke of the 'need to exterminate the Japanese').

Such statements were not uniquely Australian. Field-Marshal Sir William Slim spoke of 'ants' to be stamped on.[20] Churchill was in favour of 'laying *the cities* and the munitions centres of Japan in ashes' (emphasis added), and the US Navy's Admiral Halsey wanted 'the almost total elimination of the Japanese as a race'.[21]

The mental and emotional climate that was generated on the allied side made it possible for the civilian centres of Japan to be subjected to mass terror (fire) bombing from early 1945, and for Hiroshima and Nagasaki to be subject to nuclear attack in August, without serious objection being raised. These were war crimes of the highest magnitude, even though almost nowhere recognised as such till much later.

At the end of the war, the International Military Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) was established in Tokyo, and subsidiary tribunals throughout the region, to try war crimes, but they all proceeded on the assumption that only acts committed by the enemy could possibly be construed as criminal.

The horror that was felt in the West as details of the brutal record of Japanese actions in Burma, Borneo, and elsewhere was understood, served to exhaust all the moral outrage of which people were capable, and to screen attention from the possibility that there may have been crimes on the allied side too. The Japanese cause, being evil, had brought on mass death and destruction; the allies, being virtuous, were merely instruments of fate or higher purpose, and responsibility for death and destruction at their hands rested with the enemy. That conviction remains strong in Australia.

The issue of war responsibility was resolved in Tokyo by the tribunal ordering the execution of a small group of seven military and civilian officials, including General Hideki Tojo, on 23 December 1948. The following day, however, others who had been arrested on similar charges were all released and one of this group, Nobusuke Kishi, was Japanese Prime Minister eight years later.

For many years that outcome was generally accepted in the West as justified. The academic and general consensus that surrounded it has since dissolved, however, so that more and more students of the tribunal incline to agree that the trial was seriously flawed, and to find merit in the opinion of the Indian Mr Justice Radhabinod Pal, whose dissenting judgement rejected the notion of a 'conspiracy' to wage war and the assumption that 'crimes' could have been committed only by the defeated nation.[22]

The Chief Judge of the Tokyo tribunal was Justice William Flood Webb of Queensland. Webb made it clear that he also, had grave reservations, in particular concerning the decision to grant immunity of prosecution to the Japanese emperor. Webb clearly believed the emperor to be a major criminal, but, despite Australian focus during the war on the role of the emperor, and government commitment in the early post-war months to bringing him to trial, the American decision to spare him was quickly accepted.[23]

Separate war crimes' trials were held by the various allied countries, including Australia. These were concerned with the so-called 'conventional' crimes of brutality in the field rather than the 'political' issues of planning and executing the war. Australian courts-martial in Darwin, Hong Kong, Ambon, and elsewhere, tried 924 Japanese officers and men, acquitted 280, imprisoned 496,and executed 148.[24]

The ratio of acquittals may seem high and, given the horrors the world began to learn of during the trials, the record may not seem unduly severe. About one in three Australian war deaths came *after* capture. Of 21,649 Australians taken prisoner, 7,777 died in captivity — as against a comparable figure for prisoners in Germany and Italy of 242 deaths among 7,116 men.

To build the Burma Railway 55,000 POW's and 70,000 Asian workers were mobilized; a total of 43,000 of them died, mostly of starvation and disease, one per sleeper, before the line could be completed. Their rations fell as low as 100 grams of rice per day for prolonged periods, when even the Japanese Army standard was five times as great. From Ambon, only 121 prisoners out of 528 lived to return to Australia, while only six prisoners, all Australians, survived from the infamous 'death march' which occurred on Sandakan in Borneo, out of a total of 2,500 men.[25]

Punishment for the crimes which caused such a harvest of death and suffering seems hard to dispute, but the question of the justice of the trials is difficult to determine since only now is the record of the trials being scrutinized.

One Japanese scholar who has worked extensively on the history of these so-called 'B' and 'C' class trials notes that a high proportion of the punishments was attributed to offences committed in the POW camp setting or by camp guards. Camp guards were extremely low-level functionaries in the Japanese system, subject to brutal discipline themselves. Koreans and Taiwanese were often placed in these positions and in the Japanese hierarchy they were so low as to constitute virtual slave labour. The system that oppressed and alienated these men, from home, country, culture, language and even name, and which then gave them absolute power over foreign prisoners and encouraged the expression of their bitterness and alienation by brutality against them, was a criminal system.

Punishment was particularly heavy for those who were themselves victims of that system — the Korean and Taiwanese guards — but light for those who designed and created the system.[26] Australians were blind to the evils of Japanese institutionalised racism, and to the phenomenon of 'transferred aggression' operating within it.

Racism also affected Australian attitudes to the war in subtle ways. It is well-known that large numbers (about 120,000 in all) of civilian Japanese and American citizens of Japanese ancestry were rounded up in concentration camps in the United States for the duration of the war, suffering enormous personal and material losses for which they are still seeking compensation.

In mid-1941, just before the war began, the number of Japanese residents in Australia was small, about 1,575 people in all, including 700 seamen. After last minute repatriations, about 1,000 people were eventually interned, mostly at camps at Loveday in South Australia and Tatura in Victoria. Many of them had been in Australia for long periods, some of them, pearl fishers in particular, for more than forty years, and there was not the slightest reason, other than their Japanese blood, to suspect that they might have any connection with the enemy or plan to collaborate in enemy designs on Australia.

For many of these, their fate was even worse than that of the American detainees, since nearly all were compulsorily 'repatriated' after the war, to a country to which most had little if any allegiance and whose language some could not even speak.[27]

On the allied side, right till the very last stages of the war Japanese prisoners were few, a mere 6,400 as against 103,000 allied soldiers in Japanese hands. Eleven hundred of those Japanese prisoners were held at Cowra in western New South Wales where, in August of the same year, they were involved in the tragic and bloody incident called the 'Cowra breakout'.

Nine hundred of the prisoners joined in a mass escape attempt.[28] It was a futile gesture, for even had they escaped from the Cowra vicinity there was nowhere to go. Prompted in the main by the sense of shame at having survived capture, despite the injunction of their training that capture was a dishonour never to be allowed, they acted in desperation courting death.

The rebellion ended in the deaths of four Australian guards and one officer leading a subsequent search party, and the deaths of 234 Japanese prisoners and the wounding of another 108. Many of the Japanese were mown down in the initial assault on the guards and the camp defences, and many more committed suicide either within the compound or after escaping into the nearby countryside. But the question of the appropriateness of the Australian response, and of whether it was excessively violent or retributive, remains moot.

Some of the Australians who were at Cowra certainly believe that some Japanese were shot dead while attempting to surrender, but there appears to have been a belief that, although the guards kept shooting, they were only doing the will of prisoners determined upon death.[29]

Far from the events, moral considerations seem impossibly abstract and arcane, but the historian's task is to grapple with them anyway. A very personal assessment of these controversial issues leads me to the following conclusions, with particular reference to the issue of the war between Japan and Australia.

Australian prejudice against Japan, based on racist principles shared throughout the Western world and given expression in trade, immigration, and general policy, was one causative factor.

Though Japan has commonly been judged guilty of 'unprovoked' aggression for its attacks on Pearl Harbour and on the European colonial possessions in South-East Asia in 1941, it is now clear that Japan then faced an impossible dilemma which, once the path of negotiation or concession had been effectively closed, it met by desperate steps.

For Australia, some of the fiercest fighting of the war came in 1944-45, in campaigns at Bougainville, New Britain, the New Guinea mainland, and Borneo. Two thousand people died and about 4,500 were wounded in this fighting, but a recent book argues convincingly that it was all 'unnecessary'.[30] Japanese forces remained undefeated and intact in these places, but cut off from any active military role in the war, without supplies or reinforcements, surviving by growing vegetables. Had they simply been cordoned off in their settlements till the war ended, and then called on to surrender, casualties could have been hugely reduced.

Why Australian forces were committed to what turned into such bloody campaigns remains unclear, though the desire to maximise Australian

Japanese war brides arrive in Sydney, 1953.

influence in the post-war settlement in the region seems most likely to have played a role.

Both sides pursued morally indefensible strategies of fighting, including attacks on non-combatants; in numerical terms, the Japanese attacks on the Chinese population (from the early 1930s) and the US attacks on Japanese cities (from early 1945) caused the largest casualties, but the treatment of prisoners was indefensibly brutal on the Japanese side in numerous, well-documented cases, and on the Australian side too there were an unknown number of unnecessary or unjustified killings.

Whether the indirectly inflicted, technologically sophisticated slaughter of the fire bomb or nuclear bomb is morally less repugnant than the face-to-face violence of the prison camp guard is hard to say. Public opinion certainly sees the perpetrators of the latter as monstrous and the former as (more or less) legitimate, but there is a strong case for seeing them as equally monstrous.

Many Japanese soldiers, along with many peasants and workers, most women, and most Japanese colonial subject peoples, were victims of a system which drove and exploited them relentlessly. Japanese industrialisation was a desperate 'bootstraps' phenomenon.

All of Japanese society was transformed by industrialisation and by the struggle to attain equality with the West, but those pressures were most intensely concentrated in the Imperial Japanese Army. There, physical violence, deliberate brutalisation and dehumanisation were the rule. Military training was 'an unending stream of humiliation and rough treatment', designed to breed ruthless fighters. As the Japanese historian, Saburo Ienega, notes, 'Individuals whose own dignity and manhood had been so cruelly violated would hardly refrain from doing the same to defenceless persons under their control.'[31]

Allied armies made every effort to understand the psychology of the Japanese soldier. Racist contempt and declarations of genocidal intent merely strengthened the Japanese will to resist, and to sustain a system many found intolerable.

Some of the violence that many Western prisoners in Japanese hands suffered was often specifically designed to humiliate. Face slappings, beatings, insults and provocations were in a sense part of the revenge of an Asian people for a century of European dominance and triumphalist racism in Asia, a violent effort by Asian people to purge themselves of the self-doubt or sense of inferiority to the European that this system had engendered. The complex of motives that drove the Japanese forces included the resolve to ensure that European prestige be destroyed.

Even more than forty years after the events, it is far from easy to find a moral, humanist perspective on the war, and to set aside the prejudices of the nationalist and racist conditioning that influenced all those involved.

It would be absurd to argue that 'x' number of atrocities on one side somehow justify 'y' number on the other, or that the scale of brutality on one side could be so great as to justify some lesser retaliatory measure on the other side, or that the initial crime of aggression could be such as to justify retaliatory actions which *in other contexts* would have been atrocities. Perhaps all that we can say for sure is that war is a very dirty business, best avoided, and that ignorance and prejudice are its breeding ground.

Since the war, the nationalisms of both countries, Australia and Japan, have worked to make critical re-examinations of their own responsibility for war and their own crimes during war both rare and unpopular.

In Japan school texts are carefully scrutinised and censored to ensure that only an officially sanitised view is taught, and, increasingly, the orthodox view is the view propagated originally during the war itself: that Japan fought for the liberation of Asia from Western imperialism. In Australia, there is no censorship, but many hard questions are yet to be probed; the sacred and mythological dimension to war is every bit as sensitive as in Japan.

The allied occupation of Japan (1945-52) saw continuing and substantial Australian involvement with Japan. A Melbourne University political scientist, William MacMahon Ball, served as British representative on the Allied Council of Japan in 1946-47, and although frustrated by the determination of General MacArthur to hold all significant reins of power in his own hand, was able to direct significant effort into the process of reforming and 'democratising' Japan, particularly through promotion of a radical land reform program. At the same time, Sir William Flood Webb served as head of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and General Sir Horace Robertson commanded the British Commonwealth forces that occupied Hiroshima and Kure and the area of Western Japan as the British 'sector' of the occupation.

Many former soldiers found the transition from combat to conquerors of a (now) unresisting and (mainly) welcoming people difficult to adjust to. Some formed liaisons with Japanese women, giving rise to the subsequent problem for the Australian government of 'war brides': should such wives be admitted to Australia as exceptions to the white Australia policy?

In December 1948 Arthur Calwell, Minister of Immigration, insisted that:

'... no Japanese will be permitted to enter this country. They cannot come as the wives of Australian servicemen ... nor as businessmen to buy and sell from us ...

The feelings of the mothers and wives of Australian victims of Japanese savagery are more important than any trade or other material advantage.'[32]

In the end, and after long debate, they did come, the bans being lifted in 1952 when the first 'war bride', Cherry Parker, came to join her husband. Eventually about 600 women followed. The debate their plight stirred helped to open the issue of migration and the racial bases of Australian policy, but it was not until much later that the policy was completely abandoned and Australia began to move towards multiculturalism.

But the problems of the Australian occupation were not entirely settled even with the arrival of the 600 brides. Still, the children of Australian fathers and Japanese mothers born of unions which did not result in permanent relationships were not allowed into Australia. They were brought up, in effect, as rejects of both parents' societies, in the shadow of discrimination.[33]

Australia entered reluctantly into the eventual peace settlement with Japan, its goal of a demilitarised and disarmed Japan gradually abandoned in the face of US desire to remake Japan as an anticommunist ally, and its alarm about the speed of rearmament only allayed by the security assurances provided by the United States under the terms of the ANZUS treaty (1951).

By 1957 commercial relations, disrupted twenty years previously by the Australian refusal to countenance a bilateral commercial agreement and its 'trade diversion' policies of discrimination against Japanese goods, were of such importance to both sides as to be consolidated into an Australia-Japan Trade Agreement.

Twelve years after the Japanese surrender in 1945, the Prime Minister who signed the trade agreement of 1957 for Japan was none other than Nobusuke Kishi, prominent member of Tojo's cabinet for most of the war and designated an 'A' class war criminal after it.

From this time, the relationship grew steadily. The Japan trade accounted for 11.6 percent of Australia's exports and 2.75 percent of its imports in 1955-56, and for 21.10 per cent and 10.50 percent respectively in 1967-68.[34] By 1985, the two-way trade was running at $12.5 billion, with Japan taking 29 percent of Australian imports and Australia as Japan's fifth largest trading partner.

The pattern changed gradually from the prewar mix of wool, wheat, and iron exports in exchange for textiles and light manufactured goods, to include the full range of Australian mining exports and Japanese exports that extended from automobiles, electronic and electrical goods, machinery, chemicals, optical goods, through all sorts of consumer goods.

The relationship has become for Australia the most important of all economic relationships. As the centre of world economic activity shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific region, Japan emerged as the centre of a dynamism which has transformed East Asia and is in the process of influencing the world in innumerable ways. Japan became the 'richest' country in the world and the United States the most deeply indebted.

In 1976, the Australia-Japan relationship was consolidated with a further treaty, the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The main thrust of this treaty was to locate the Australia/Japan relationship in both bilateral and multilateral contexts as a core element in each country's definition of its external relations.

Both sides probably believed in 1976 that their economies neatly matched each other, the food and raw materials of Australia and the manufactured goods of Japan, and this supposed 'inter-dependence' was certainly a comforting notion on the Australian side.

Ten years after the treaty, Australian dependence on Japanese imports of food and minerals is still substantial, but Japan's dependence on Australia as a supplier has greatly diminished in a world market in which the primary producer is severely disadvantaged .

From the long-term perspective, the transformation of Australian-Japan relations could not be more complete, and only in very recent years has it become possible to speak of an Australian *dependence* on Japan.

From the inauspicious beginnings of the presence of small groups of pearl divers and prostitutes from Japan in outback Australia, through a long period in which the assumption of Japanese inferiority was basic to Australian thinking and discrimination entrenched in Australian policy, and via a traumatic and bitter war experience, we have arrived at a situation in which Australian governments and businessmen compete for Japanese favours. Japanese economic penetration in Australia has extended and deepened, from commercial interests to substantial equity stakes in coal, iron, and other minerals; and from commercial interests in vehicles and manufacturing to the establishment of a considerable off-shore manufacturing base in which Australia forms one link in a world-wide Japanese manufacturing system.

Completely banned from Australia thirty years ago, Japanese immigrants are now present in all major cities, and the Australian government competes to attract Japanese immigrants, especially the so-called 'Silver Columbia' retired Japanese business people, precisely the generation against which Australia had fought so bitterly in the 1940s.

Japanese investment in real estate, property, mining and industry helps greatly to sustain the stock market and the economy generally.

Japanese language is the most popular foreign language option in the schools of several states, and special Japanese schools for the children of expatriate Japanese are subsidised. Japanese tourism is the hope of the tourism industry, and Japanese culture (from food through martial arts, music, film, flower arrangement, calligraphy, various fine arts and crafts, design and fashion) continues to win Australian adherents.

The Australian-Japanese ceremonial get-togethers regularly attract the top political and business leaders of Australia. And political leaders and pundits generally see nothing incongruous in recommending to their constituents or readers the adoption of Japanese ways in all sorts of areas, from education and management to labour relations and industrial planning.

The balance of advantage in the relationship has certainly shifted. While Australia feels itself dependent on Japan the reverse is certainly not true. Curiosity about, and interest in Australian culture is felt by a substantial minority, but for a much larger number Australia is little more than a cheap and pleasant vacation resort where the sun shines in the (Japanese) winter and exotic animals may be inspected.

A (possibly apocryphal) Japanese businessman was quoted in the *Japan Times* (11 August 1985) as saying: 'The next century Japan will use Australia as a mining concession, the United States as a grain silo, and Europe as a boutique'. Such statements capture some of the mood of rising nationalism and confidence of Japan, the economic superpower of the late 1980s.

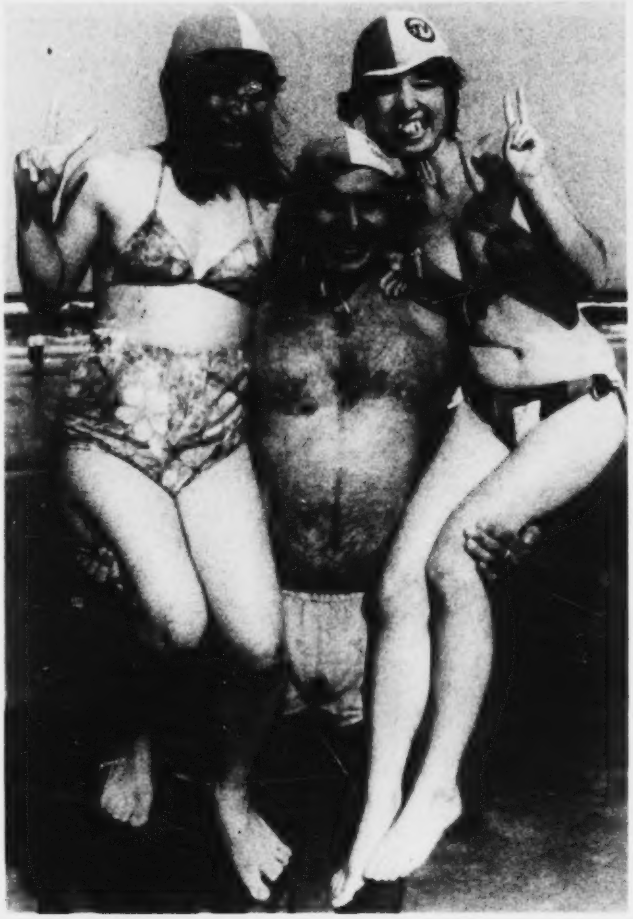
In Australia, despite the rise of Japan to the 'Number One' industrial country in the world, the cultural and ideological apparatus of dependence towards the United States remains largely intact.

Whether Australian conservatives will attempt to retool the country's traditionally dependent orientation from the United States to Japan remains to be seen. Despite the apparent warmth of the relationship, it remains very pragmatically based, and liable to change.

Haradoke Cafe, Sydney 1987 — a cafe catering for Japanese living in Sydney and filled with young Japanese watching dubbed video Westerns such as 'Top Gun' and indulging in the Japanese obsession with 'Manga', cartoons drawn from western models and converted to Japanese idiom. Many television cartoons shown in Australia are Japanese in origin.

According to a survey of opinions of Australian business executives in October 1984, no less than 89 percent believed the Japanese to be untrustworthy and unethical,[35] and the mood among Australian businessmen late in 1987 was reported one of 'simmering bitterness', with 'tensions, even resentment' over the crisis in the coal and iron ore industries and continuing restrictions in Japanese agricultural markets.[36]

Yet, if Australia in the late 1980s is unique among 'advanced' countries in that unrefined raw materials and agricultural produce account for more than 90 percent of its exports, and if competition forces it to cut prices to retain its market share as a cheap supplier of food and raw materials, it is hard to see how Japan is to blame. There clearly is no 'special relationship' capable of overriding commercial considerations in determining Japanese business' purchasing priorities.



Maki and Shiba, tourists from Japan, meet Bruce, a lifeguard at Surfers Paradise, 1987. Australia is becoming an increasingly popular tourist resort with the Japanese who see it as a safe and comparatively inexpensive country to visit.

In one hundred years Australia has moved from ignorance of Japan to dependence on it, yet the Australian public seems only half-conscious of what has happened.

No Australian federal politician, newspaper editor or business leader speaks Japanese, and only a relative handful of students presented for examination in Japanese at final-year school examinations in the 1980s. Still, political relations, though scarcely warm, are correct and cordial; the economic relationship, however unequal, is not entirely one-sided; and person-to-person contacts of a grass roots kind have developed remarkably.

In such contacts, rooted in the spirit of equality, understanding, and mutual respect, lies the best hope of strengthening and transforming the Australia-Japan relationship as a whole.

It is the north of the country where the Japanese impact was most felt during the early period of contact, where the military conflict was most intense in the early 1940s (to the extent that the abandonment to Japan of the continent north of the 'Brisbane Line' was contemplated in 1942 as a possible contingency measure), and where a large share of the mineral resources that attracted Japanese business interest and investment in the 1970s and the 1980s have been concentrated.

There could be no better symbol of the transformation of the relationship than the reports, late in 1987, that the government of the Northern Territory had asked a consortium of Japanese companies to build a 1500 kilometre railway into the heart of the country to Alice Springs, to be paid for by the grant of substantial mineral developmental leases, in uranium, platinum, gold, and bauxite.[37]

Even more remarkable than the project itself is the fact that it could be announced and apparently accepted as simply one more business deal, when a very few years ago any such proposal would have been inconceivable, and forty-five years ago it would have been the stuff of treason.

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ABOVE DOWN UNDER
AUSTRALIA AND INDONESIA

Richard Chauvel

Indonesia and Australia are inextricably bound to each other by geography. Although the human contact dates from the arrival of the Aborigines from the archipelago there has been remarkably little interaction between the peoples of the Australian mainland and the Indonesian archipelago throughout the pre-colonial, colonial and independence periods of our histories.

Since Indonesia gained independence, relations between the two countries have fluctuated from the cordial and intimate to the distant and strained. The memories of the former, during Indonesia's struggle for independence, have to some extent sustained relations through long periods where the latter has prevailed.

This chapter will discuss in an historical context some of the factors which have made the relationship less cordial than hoped. It will suggest that the expectations for a special relationship were based on a selective and romanticised view of Australian support for Indonesia in the 1940s, and that these expectations may have made the acknowledgment and management of differences more difficult.

Indonesia and Australia are frequently referred to as next door neighbours. The two countries are separated only by the Timor and Arafura Seas and, when Australia exercised administrative control in Papua New Guinea, there was a shared land border.

However, the idea of neighbours is misleading in that the border regions of each country are remote from the respective political, economic and demographic centres. While Darwin and Ambon are 'neighbours', Canberra and Jakarta are not and Jakarta and Canberra have dominated the relationship.

The border regions of each country are among the least developed economically and least important politically. The Indonesian border region includes provinces where there has been resistance to central government control — the South Moluccas, Irian Jaya and East Timor — these provinces have been politically sensitive rather than politically and economically important. There has been trade between northern Australia and eastern Indonesia predating European settlement in the Northern Territory, but this has been hampered rather than facilitated by political and administrative boundaries established at the turn of the century.

Another dimension to the distance between the political and economic centres is that Indonesia and Australia were part of different colonial systems in which the main interaction was between the colony and the metropolitan power, rather than between neighbours.

It is partly as a consequence of this colonial heritage that economic relations between the two countries have been a minor part of the predominantly political relationship. Lacking a diversity of contact and mutual interest the relationship is vulnerable to changes in the political climate.

There has been an Australian preoccupation with Indonesia. Indonesia tends to be thought of in terms of a bilateral relationship rather than within its regional context. The preoccupation may be based on the perception that a conventional military threat to Australia, however unlikely such an attack might be, would come through or from the archipelago. The fear of the 'yellow peril' is deeply rooted in the psyche of 'white' Australia and was overlayed during the Cold War by a fear of communist influence. The preoccupation is not reciprocated; Australia is not important in Indonesia's priorities.

There are obvious cultural and political differences between the two countries, which in recent years have been cited as factors to explain misunderstandings between Indonesia and Australia.

Indonesia is a sophisticated and culturally diverse society with a long history of authoritarian social and political control (and resistance to it) and relatively brief periods when political forces openly competed with each other. Although

Australia has become culturally diverse it remains predominantly European. Its political system is confrontational and a broad spectrum of political groups are able to express their views.

The Australian media, while controlled by a few large corporations, have a tradition of scrutinising domestic and foreign politics. Australian criticisms of Indonesian actions in East Timor and Irian Jaya, along with issues such as corruption and human rights, have caused offence to the Indonesian government.

It is argued (in Indonesia and Australia) that, if Australia is to maintain good relations with Indonesia, then the prevailing cultural and political norms, particularly concerning the scope of permissible criticism and scrutiny, have to be respected by government and individuals in Australia. In recent years criticism has not come from government, but from individuals, political groups and the media.

The relationship between Indonesia and Australia has been characterised since the war by Australian groups taking an active interest in and scrutiny of the affairs of the archipelago. No Australian government has been able to maintain relations with Indonesia on a purely government to government basis, insulated from domestic politics. The question remains why both countries maintain cordial relations with third countries of comparable disparities, but not with each other.

Archaeological evidence would suggest that Aborigines reached the Australian mainland through the Indonesian archipelago from the Sunda subcontinent around 40,000 years ago. The most likely route was through Borneo, Sulawesi (Celebes), the Moluccas to New Guinea which was then attached to the Cape York peninsula.

It could be said that the Aborigines share common ancestors with the earliest Indonesians. The Australoid and homo erectus Australians appear to have been untouched by the more recent (56,000 years ago) migration of mongoloids from China through South-East Asia to Micronesia and Polynesia.[1]

The isolation of the Australian mainland and its inhabitants from the archipelago survived until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although there is a probability that there was earlier Portuguese landing on the mainland, there remains little in the way of evidence.'[2]

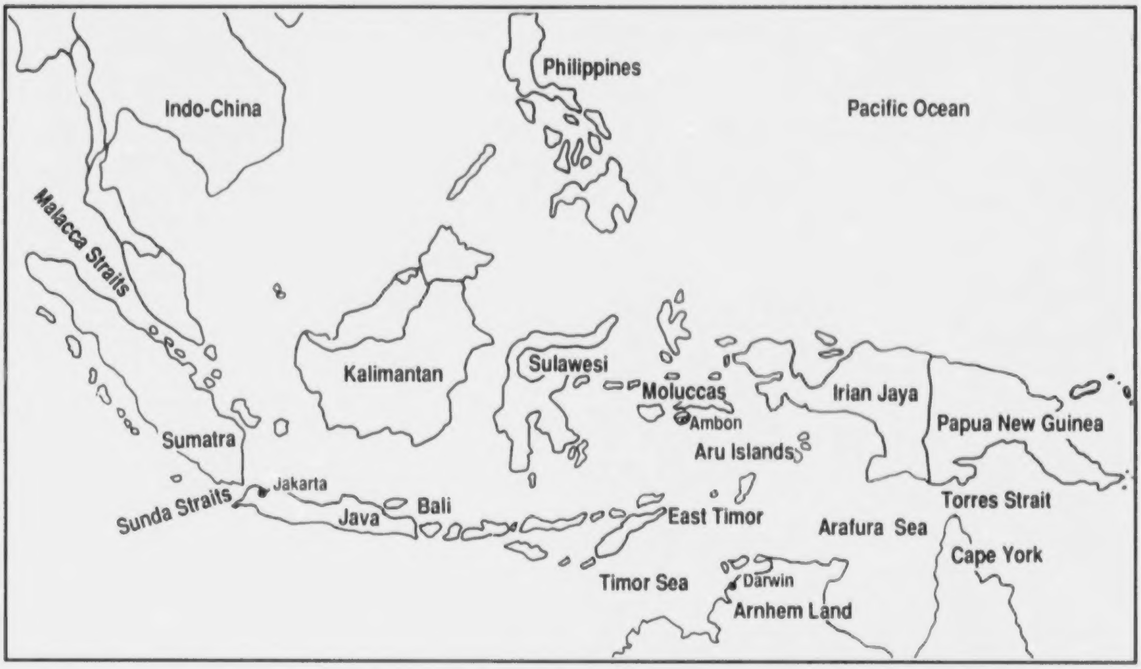
The first documented landing on the Australian mainland by a non-Aborigine was by Willem Jansz the commander of the *Duyfken* in 1606. Jansz had been sent by the Dutch East India Company, shortly after it had established itself in the Moluccas and Bantan to explore 'the vast country of Nova Guinea and other unknown Eastern and Southern regions'. Jansz sailed from Bantan through the archipelago along the south coast of New Guinea then south down the west coast of the Cape York Peninsula.[3]

Dutch landings on the Australian mainland increased during the seventeenth century after the route from Europe to the Indies was changed. The Portuguese and early Dutch seafarers sailed north-east from the Cape of Good Hope to Goa or the Sunda Straits. The time of the voyage was halved after Hendrick Bouwer, on instructions from the Company, discovered the southern route utilising the prevailing westerly winds of the roaring forties until the ships reached the longitude of the Sunda straits then turning north assisted by the South-East trade winds. Not surprisingly it was not long before Dutch seafarers themselves were confronting the West Australian coast. There are numerous shipwrecks to testify to the misfortune of those who failed to turn northward early enough.

The Dutch contact and interest in Australia was a consequence, or rather an unintended by-product, of their trading activities in the Indies. The Dutch East India Company paid attention to Australia when it caused the Company trouble, but otherwise it evoked little interest and was generally ignored. It may not be exaggerating too much to say that the government in Jakarta maintains the same view of Australia.

The first substantive relationship since the migration of the Aborigines between peoples of the archipelago and Australians was the trepang trade. Traders based in the Indies port of Macassar (now Ujung Pandang, South Sulawesi) visited the northern and eastern coast of Arnhem Land to harvest and cure trepang (beche de-mer).

Trepang was highly regarded by the Chinese for its culinary qualities. It was used in soups, and braised with vegetables. It was thought to act as a



general stimulant and aphrodisiac as well as enhance the flavour of food. Trepang is first mentioned in Chinese texts in the sixteenth century, while the trade in South-East Asia developed in the late seventeenth century. It would seem probable that Macassan visits to northern Australia developed slowly in the course of the eighteenth century to a peak in the early and mid nineteenth century, when it was first observed by Europeans. Australia supplied about a quarter of the Chinese market.[4]

Each year the Macassans arrived with the north-west monsoon in December and January and departed in April when the winds changed to the south-east. At its height the trade involved significant numbers of people. In the first half of the nineteenth century between 30 and 60 praus (Indonesian sailing vessels) visited the coast each season. A prau had a crew of about 30. Each year between 900 and 1,800 young male Macassans spent four months collecting and preserving trepang. For the Aboriginal communities of coastal Arnhem Land it was the first sustained interaction with representatives of a complex society.

The trepang trade is important because it was a relationship between indigenous inhabitants and operated relatively independently of the colonial authorities in Australia and the Indies. Through the trepang trade the northern Australian coast and its inhabitants were participants in a trading network which extended to China.

The first European observers were not surprised by the activities of the Macassans. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century a sense of abnormality had crept into the description. Alfred Searcy, the sub-collector of customs for the South Australian government described one Macassan camp in 1884:

'To think such a scene was possible on the coast of Australia! There were four proes anchored close in to the beach, some sixteen large dredging canoes at work, and numerous smaller ones plying between the proes and the beach. On shore were four great smoke-houses, built of bamboo and palm-leaves. Of Malays (Macassans) there were about one hundred engaged at various occupations in connection with the preparation of the trepang. Some had only scant clothing, others wore their gay saarongs (sic), and all had gaudy handkerchiefs twisted round their heads. The boxes containing the necessary ingredients, etc., for making their 'quids' were lying round everywhere. The 'quids' were made by rolling up a piece of Areca nut in a leaf smeared with wet lime, which was placed between the lips and left until it dissolved, causing red expectoration and black teeth.

A large number of aborigines, men, women and children, most of them in a state of nature, were also present. The niggers were either assisting the Malays, or lolling about smoking cigarettes made of Malay tobacco, rolled up in pandanus palm-leaf.'[5]

Although the trepang trade lasted for about two centuries and involved the annual visits of thousands of Macassans, the Aboriginal communities did not undergo any fundamental change as a result of the interaction. The limited impact of the interaction was related to the autonomy of the Macassans' activity. The visitors were not dependent on the Aboriginal communities for either labour or food. They were not exploiting a resource which was used by the Aborigines.

It is evident from Searcy's observations that Aborigines did assist the Macassans in the collection and curing of trepang.The exchange of goods appears to have been limited to tortoise shell and possibly pearl-shell and pearls, gathered by the Aborigines to barter for food, liquor and tobacco.

Given that the Macassans were male and mostly young it is not surprising that there was a certain amount of cohabitation. Some Aborigines trace their family links back to the Macassans. The most extensive experience for the Aborigines was for those who accompanied the Macassans to their home port.

In terms of material culture the most significant to be adopted by the Aborigines was the dug-out canoe, which enabled more effective exploitation of coastal waters. The presence of the Macassans is represented in Aboriginal art and related in oral histories. The Macassarese language had some influence on Aboriginal languages with the incorporation of loan words, particularly those dealing with parts of praus, and some verbs to convey new concepts, but the grammatical structure remained unchanged.

The Macassan presence is also reflected in Aboriginal ceremonies, as in these excerpts from a long song cycle sung at mortuary rituals in north-eastern Arnhem Land:

The Prau's Rigging
'It hangs down, that rigging, like falling rain.
They were looking at the rigging, hanging down from the cross-bar, from the top of the mast ...
They looked at the rigging, ropes dangling downward ...
Looked at it hanging down from the cross-bar, from the mast, like falling rain ...
On top of the cross-bar, hanging down to the deck, the sail at the mast ...
The Prau Sails
It ran fast, that boat, swaying and splashing through the water,
Nose rising and falling, cleaving the water,
That boat, heeling over, following the ... sail
And slanting the mast, the main mast ...
The Wind in the Sails
A fish has swallowed a hook: (they) haul in a kingfish, throwing it down ...
Sails flapping, drifting along, that ship with its sails,
Going along, crying, whistling through the rigging and mast blocks ...
Sound of singing from the mast top and from the mast blocks,
East wind whistling and crying ...'[6]

The Macassan participation in the trepang trade was terminated in 1907 by the South Australian government. In the second half of the nineteenth century there had been increasing controls imposed on the trade in the form of licenses and duties which were a factor in the decline in trade.

The end of the trepang trade symbolised the consolidation of colonial states on both sides of the Arafura Sea. Coastal Arnhem Land was to cease being the furthest extremity of the archipelago's trading network and become part of the Commonwealth of Australia. Macassan traders were restricted to the territory of the Netherlands Indies colonial state.

The memories of the Macassan trepang trade have been revived recently with the visits of Aborigines to Ujung Pandang (Macassar) and the building of a replica of a Macassan prau, *Hati Marege*, which was sailed to Marege as part of the Australian Bicentenary celebrations.

Although the Dutch had been aware of the Australian mainland for over a century and a half before Captain Cook completed the task of mapping the continent's east coast, they had never considered it economically attractive, at least compared with their possessions in the Indies. However, the Dutch ports in the Indies assumed great importance for British explorers and traders.

For example, in 1790 Lieutenant Ball in the *Supply* sailed from Port Jackson to Batavia to negotiate essential foodstuffs and a sailing craft. The Dutch facilities, food supplies and livestock in the Indies were much more accessible than Britain itself or the British possessions in India. The Indies '...represented congenial, European-structured regional support; the Indies' economy became an object for northern and western Australian exploration and settlement in the nineteenth century'.[7]

The dependency of British settlement in Australia on Dutch support in the Indies was most obvious in the initial attempts to establish a presence in the Northern Territory. One of the principal motives to establish a British settlement on the northern coast was to trade with the archipelago. The short-lived settlement of Victoria at Port Essington was dependent for vital supplies on Timor, Bali and Ambon.[8]

From 1885 Australians operating from Darwin were involved in pearling in the south-eastern Moluccas particularly around the Aru islands and trading centre of Dobo. The Aru islanders had previously had the pearling industry to themselves. The Dutch authorities sold fishing leases to Australians. Indonesians were among the divers and pearlers working along the northern Australian coastline.[9]

By end of the nineteenth century, the Netherlands Indies had been transformed from a source of support to a focus of strategic concern for the newly federated Commonwealth of Australia. Indeed, the felt need for a united voice on security and military issues had been an important motive in the formation of the Commonwealth.

Although the Indies had the potential to be an 'orderly buffer state' between Australia and the rest of the world, by the beginning of this century the viability of Dutch authority, so recently consolidated, was a matter of concern. The archipelago was perceived to be a channel through which or a base from which Australian security could be threatened.

Dutch authority was seen to be under challenge from an emerging Japan, externally, and

Indonesian prau with fish drying on racks, photographed in Australian waters by Coastwatch.

Proclamation of the Indonesian Republic on 17 August, 1945, was monitored by Indonesians listening to Batavia Radio on a receiver they had made from components 'borrowed' from the Dutch.

Indonesian national and Islamic aspirations internally. There was also fear of a German assumption to the Dutch Crown. During the First World War the Australian navy cooperated with the Japanese to curtail the activities of the Germans, ignoring Dutch claims of territoriality in the archipelago's waters.[10]

After the First World War there was a generalised strategic interest in the archipelago, as witnessed by visits of politicians, and a specific military interest in Japanese activities, together with some growth in trade. However, official contact grew slowly and until the mid 1930s communication between Melbourne/Canberra and Batavia was through London and The Hague. Australia had access to British diplomatic and consular reports on the Indies.

In 1934 Sir John Latham, the Minister for External Affairs and Minister for Industry, led an 'Australian Eastern Mission' to South-East Asia, including the Indies. Latham argued, in his report to the government, that Australia should take a greater interest in the Indies and recommended that a Trade Commissioner be appointed to Batavia, which was implemented in the following year. A government commissioner was appointed in 1939 and diplomatic relations were formally established in late 1941.[11]

It may be generally true that colonies are better integrated into their respective imperial systems than with their neighbours. It certainly was the case with Indonesia and Australia. The establishment of direct diplomatic relations was hindered, even after the German occupation of the Netherlands, by the lack of autonomy of the Indies administration. Australian policy during this time was heavily influenced by British and United States' attitudes.

The fears about the vulnerability of Dutch control in the Indies held in Australia since the turn of the century were realised with the rapid Japanese conquest in early 1942. The war, and the Indonesian struggle for independence which followed, transformed the relationship between Australia and the archipelago, both on a government to government level and in terms of large scale contact between peoples. In less than a decade a relatively detached colonial relationship became a complex, intimate and volatile relationship between independent neighbours.

In hindsight, relations between Indonesia and Australia during Indonesia's struggle for independence have been thought of as a 'golden age', with Australia being regarded and regarding itself as an important supporter of Indonesia's independence. This romantic image is symbolised in the film *Indonesia Calling*, which celebrates the waterfront workers' support of Indonesia.

While this situation reflects the difficult relations subsequently, it glosses over the ambivalence, ambiguities and contradictions in Australian policy and attitudes towards Indonesia during the 1940s.

In 1942 Australian troops were committed in the defence of the colonial status-quo in Java, Ambon and Timor. After the Dutch surrender Australia became the home of the Netherlands Indies government in exile and for that government's political detainees. The Australian government insisted that all these political detainees be released.

In 1944-45 Australian troops fought in West New Guinea, the Northern Moluccas and Borneo. Following the Japanese surrender, the Australian Army was the occupying force in eastern Indonesia and Borneo, assisted by officials of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) who were responsible for the re-establishment of civilian administration. In 1945/1946 Australian waterside workers boycotted Dutch shipping to Indonesia and openly supported the newly proclaimed Republic of Indonesia.

In 1947 Australia became the Indonesian nominee on the United Nations Good Offices Committee (later Commission for Indonesia) and Australia became a cautious supporter of the Indonesian case in international forums. In 1949-1950 Australia vigorously opposed the transfer of sovereignty of Dutch West New Guinea to the Republic of Indonesia.

The war brought about the most intense interaction between Australians and Indonesians (and the colonial Dutch) in a period of great political and social change in Indonesia. Thousands of Australian servicemen fought in, were imprisoned in and later occupied parts of Indonesia. Hundreds of Indonesians, political detainees and supporters of the Dutch Colonial Government spent several years in Australia. It was the first large scale contact between the two societies since the end of the trepang trade.

The experience generated an awareness of Indonesia among Australians and a sense of its strategic importance to the defence of Australia. Australians developed a sense of involvement in the affairs of the archipelago. The Australian Government asserted that it had an interest in political settlement in Indonesia, while groups within the Australian community developed relationships with Indonesians independent of the government and endeavoured to influence the direction of government policy.

The presence in Australia of the Netherlands Indies 'government in exile' together with thousands of Indonesian administrative and military personnel, as well as political detainees, was a major influence in the relationship. It was a common perception in Australia that the Dutch had surrendered to the Japanese without much of a fight and had forfeited their right to govern. The demonstrated vulnerability of Dutch authority created an ambiguity in Australian attitudes towards the Dutch.

Australia's commitment to restoring the Dutch colonial regime was not unqualified as it also wanted to insure its own security. In 1943 Dr Evatt, the Minister for External Affairs, asserted Australia was a leading nation in the South-West Pacific and would play a major role in the postwar order. He is thought to have proposed to the Americans that Australia assume control of Dutch Timor and Dutch New Guinea together with the islands of south-eastern Moluccas after the war.

Evatt stated that 'Australia will naturally regard as of crucial importance to its security the arch of islands lying to the north and north-east of our continent...it will... be vitally concerned as to who shall live in, develop, and control these areas ...' He also spoke of a partnership between Australia and the Netherlands in '...developing and bringing a better way of life to the peoples of Indonesia...'.[12]

The Dutch saw Australian ambitions as a possible threat to their own control of the Indies. The Australian government struggled with the task of reconciling its wartime alliance obligations with its long-term defence interests and its doctrine of anti-colonialism. It was caught between maintaining its links with and obligations to the old world, while trying to come to terms with the new world.

As it turned out Australia played a far less grandiose post-surrender role than that envisaged by Evatt in 1943. It was a role which essentially supported the restoration of Dutch control. Australian troops fought in West New Guinea, the Northern Moluccas and Borneo. TheAustralian Armed Forces were responsible for the re-occupation of Borneo and eastern Indonesia from the Japanese. Dutch administrators of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration accompanied the Australian press and assumed responsibility for the civil administration. In the Australian occupied areas in eastern Indonesia the local people were informed, inter alia:

'By command of General Sir Thomas Blamey, Allied Commander in this area, the Netherlands East Indies Laws, with which you are familiar, will be applied and enforced by the Officers of the Netherlands East Indies Civil Administration now present in your country ...'[13]

The NICA units were made available by the Netherlands East Indies Government to the Allied Army to help discharge its responsibility for civil administration and relief in occupied areas. The NICA units had the authority of their government for administering, disciplining and employing the population. Their task was to relieve combat units of the burden of civil administration.[14]

In contrast to the British forces in Java and Sumatra, the Australians did not recognise the de facto authority of the newly proclaimed Republic. In Indonesian eyes Australia was seen as assisting the Dutch Colonial Government re-establish its authority outside the Republican strongholds on Java and Sumatra.[15] In July 1946 authority was transferred to the Dutch and Australian troops were withdrawn.

The transfer of the Netherlands Indies authorities with their considerable entourage to Australia was not without its difficulties. The Netherlands Indies community had brought with them the conflicts and contradictions of colonial society. The colonial hierarchy did not accommodate easily to Australian circumstances. Within a month of arrival two thousand Indonesian seamen were on strike demanding Australian wages.

In 1943 the Dutch attempt to relocate these political detainees from Tanah Merah in West New Guinea to Australia and continue to detain them as 'prisoners of war' created tensions with the government, which in Rupert Lockwood's words, found itself acting as the 'gaoler of a foreign empire's discontented subjects...',[16] and hostility within sections of the Australian community.

Hand-written notes from the internees picked up by trade unionists in Bowen harbour and Liverpool railway station initiated a process through which civil-libertarian groups and trade unions successfully pressured the Australian government to insist on the internees' release. The campaign forged a bond between the former internees and their Australian supporters which resulted in the formation of an important source of support for Indonesian nationalist objectives, and after the Proclamation of Independence, for the Indonesian Republic.

The involvement of Australians, particularly the waterfront workers, with the former Tanah Merah internees and Indonesian seamen was the first and still the most important case where political groups have sought to influence government policy and involve themselves in the internal affairs of the archipelago. Through the instrument of boycotting Dutch shipping, the waterfront unions sought to hinder Dutch attempts to re-occupy and re-supply their positions in the Indies at the same time as pressure the Australian Government to support the Indonesian Republic internationally. Cartoons of the day depicted Prime Minister Chifley and External Affairs Minister Evatt receiving their orders from the 'Waterfront Foreign Office'.

The boycott began in September 1945, immediately following the proclamation of independence. Rupert Lockwood, a supporter of the waterfront action, described the campaign against the Dutch:

'Indonesian troops mutinied, refusing orders from Dutch officers to prepare to fight the new Indonesian Republic. Indonesian seamen walked off ships, refusing to carry troops, munitions, archives, currency and other paraphernalia of colonial rule. Indian, Chinese and Malayan seamen joined the Indonesians' boycott. Waterside workers, first at Brisbane then at other ports round the coast, refused to load Dutch cargoes, tug-crews would not provide tow-ropes, shipyard unions denied repairs to Dutch ships, Royal Netherlands Indies Airforce aircraft and Navy craft were sometimes kept out of the Java battle zones by bans. The boycott extended to Dutch transport, stores and depots ashore. Some 31 Australian trade unions and four unions of Asian seamen temporarily organised in Sydney imposed boycotts on any Dutch activity likely to aid the war on the Indonesian Republic.[17]

Filming Chirstopher Koch 's novel The Year of Living Dangerously.*The film depicts the traumatic events leading up to the abortive 1965 coup and explains the political conflicts with the use of motifs drawn from the Javanese shadow plays.*

Lockwood estimated that 559 vessels, warships, troop ships and merchant ships were affected by the four-year-long boycott.

What motivated the Australian supporters of the Indonesian independence cause? Lockwood acknowledges:

'... the strong undercurrent of sympathy for the downcast and dispossessed runs through Australian society, that the egalitarian politics is the clue to resentments and actions against colonialism and racism ... but ... many still viewing through the foggy dews of White Australia mentality felt that the independent Asian power emerging within the husk of the European empires offered a rising prosperity and industrial opportunity for the deprived millions. The satisfactions thus engendered would relieve Australia of the nightmare of southward migrating millions and multiply her exports.'

Lockwood reported that Dr H.J. van Mook, the Lieutenant Governor-General was bewildered that Australia, while rigidly excluding Asian immigrants, should have made cause with Asians against Europeans.[18]

Australian government policy towards the Indonesian-Dutch dispute was cautious, undecided and divided. It recognised Dutch sovereignty, indeed helped to restore Dutch authority in eastern Indonesia, but wanted a political settlement between the Dutch and the Republic. Dr Evatt still clung to the idea of a continued European presence in the region, as evidenced by his article in the *New York Times* in April 1948, in which he argued for the value of European colonial powers 'instilling the conception of [the] individual's rights', noting that independence and democracy were not always the same thing and observing that a nationalist movement sometimes contains fascist totalitarian elements.[19]

The Dutch 'police actions' (military attack) against the Republic were important turning points in shifting Australian policy to support the Republic. The Dutch attacks demonstrated their reluctance to negotiate a settlement. Following the first 'police action', after some hesitation, the Australian government took initiatives to bring the 'Indonesian question' before the United Nations Security Council. Australia became a member of the Good Offices Commission, as a nominee of Indonesia. The 'police actions' helped convince the government that the Republic was a greater asset to Australian security than a Dutch dominated government.

Ideally, the Australian government wanted the maintenance of Dutch influence in Indonesia, particularly in defence matters, after a settlement with moderate elements within the Republic. It was not particularly sensitive to the Republic's objective of independence and non-alignment, which aroused fears of a strategic vacuum. Australia envisaged Netherlands involvement as maintaining security in South-East Asia in cooperation with the United States and Britain. The Dutch military actions and their refusal to negotiate made these objectives difficult to achieve.

Australia's role in the United Nations Good Offices Committee and the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, along with the boycott of Dutch shipping, constitutes an important component in the 'golden age' of relations between Indonesia and Australia. Australia, and its second representative, T.K. Critchley, were seen as important advocates for and protectors of Republican interests.

However, before a transfer of sovereignty had been successfully negotiated, the future status of Dutch West New Guinea emerged as an issue which would dominate Australian-Indonesia relations for the next decade.

It would appear that the Australian government had not considered West New Guinea as a factor in determining its policy towards the Indonesian-Dutch dispute when New Guinea appeared on the agenda for negotiations in mid-1949. The Netherland's participation in the South Pacific Commission on behalf of West New Guinea at Australia's invitation implied specific recognition of Dutch sovereignty and desirability of cooperation between the administrations of West New Guinea and Papua New Guinea. Yet the earlier agreements between the Republic and the Netherlands - Lingadjati and Renville — had stipulated that the transfer of sovereignty would include the entire Netherlands Indies, i.e. including West New Guinea.

Australia had supported both these agreements. Only in late July 1949 did the Department of External Affairs formulate a position on West New Guinea. It considered that West New Guinea occupied a special position geographically, ethnically and politically. It had a strategic position in relation to the northern Australian coastline.

The welfare of the people of West New Guinea would be better served through eventual integration with Papua New Guinea rather than with Indonesia. The Department feared that Indonesian control might result in a large influx of Asians whose influence on the indigenous peoples could be undesirable. The Department desired that the future status of West New Guinea be determined independently of the transfer of sovereignty.[20]

During the final negotiations in The Hague, Critchley was instrumental in devising the compromise formula that enabled the separation of West New Guinea from the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia. The Agreement acknowledged that the parties were in dispute about the status of West New Guinea and that its status would be resolved through negotiation within a year.

In the period since the transfer of sovereignty in 1949, relations between Australia and Indonesia have been dominated by three regional conflicts — West New Guinea, the confrontation with Malaysia and the integration of Portuguese East Timor — and a newspaper article. Seen from an Australian perspective, each of the regional issues involved an expansion of Indonesian influence outside its existing borders. In the case of West New Guinea and Portugese Timor the areas of conflict lay in that 'arch of islands' defined by Dr Evatt as being of vital concern to Australia.

It has been a period of considerable social and political change in both Indonesia and Australia. Indonesia has had three systems of government, two Presidents and a major political upheaval. Australia has had eight Prime Ministers and government has changed hands between the Australian Labor Party and conservative coalitions on four occasions. In the past forty years Indonesia has developed into a major regional power in South-East Asia. Its leaders have grown in confidence and experience. Australians have struggled to accommodate Indonesia's emergence as an independent power.

In the 1980s Indonesia is, in many respects, a more significant power than Australia, with a more accepted and clearly defined role in the region. Within the framework of Indonesia's interests and priorities Australia plays a very minor role. One Indonesian academic has suggested that the low priority current Indonesian leaders give to Australia is a reflection of self-confidence rooted in the history of the old and powerful kingdoms of Sriwijaya and Majapahit: that is a history which Australia lacks.[21]

Not only have Indonesia's political leaders grown in confidence, but it has been noted that there has been a change in their background. During the struggle for independence and during the 1950s the governing elite was ethnically diverse, Dutch-educated and internationalist in its orientation. In the 1980s, while many of the civilian ministers and senior officials have been educated in the West, some of the senior military officers have had little exposure to the outside world and their world view is rooted in the practices and precepts of Central Java.[22]

Hill tribes' woman, East Timor, 1974.

Australia's new Liberal Party government, which came to power in December 1949, was not inhibited by the contradictions of the Chifley government's policy towards Indonesia in expressing itself forcefully in support of continued Netherlands sovereignty over West New Guinea. The Minister for External Affairs, P.C. Spender, not only supported the Dutch but also insisted that Australia had a vital interest in the outcome of the negotiations.

The Australian reaction, both government and opposition, was conditioned by a belief in the importance of New Guinea for the security of Australia — a belief reinforced by the recent experience of the war. West New Guinea was seen to be ethnically different from the rest of Indonesia. There was reluctance to acknowledge the Indonesian nation state as a political rather than a cultural concept in which West New Guinea was as integral a part as Java.

Aside from the security interest, the status of

West New Guinea impacted on the Australian administration of the eastern half of the island. This was particularly the case because the Dutch rationale for retaining West New Guinea shifted to preparing the Papuans for self-determination, either separately or united with Papua New Guinea.

As the West New Guinea dispute wore on and warmed up, the Australian position became more exposed. Australia had miscalculated the weakness of the Dutch position and the determination of the Indonesians to realise their national claim.[23] In 1961 Australia had little choice but to accept the U.S. supported transfer of West New Guinea to Indonesia.

The confident assertions of Australia's vital interests in West New Guinea and support for the Dutch position in 1950 had thus dissolved eleven years later in the acceptance of the very scenario it had sought to avoid. In the process Australia had expended much of the goodwill developed in 1947-49 and had foregone, along with the Dutch, the opportunity of supporting the moderate governments in Jakarta of the early 1950s.

This process lead to a re-examination of policy towards Indonesia under External Affairs Minister Garfield Barwick in the early 1960s through which the scope and limited influence was more clearly recognised. There was an awareness that Australian policy could not diverge significantly from that of the United States and that Australia should avoid antagonising Indonesia.[24]

After the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in 1962, Australian interest in Irian Jaya, as West New Guinea is now known, has continued. The relationship with Indonesia where it relates to Irian Jaya has become more complex with the independence of Papua New Guinea.

The 1979 famine in East Timor went largely unreported in Australia.

The principal issues at stake have been Papuan political aspirations and the resistance activities of the OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka), transmigration and the border crossing of refugees into Papua New Guinea. There is residual concern about the impact on Irian Jaya's Melanesian society of its incorporation into a Malayo-Indonesian political system and the settlement of large numbers of Indonesians from other parts of the archipelago in Irian Jaya, both through the government-sponsored 'transmigration program' and voluntary migration.

The Australian government's interest is in the consequences of Indonesian rule in Irian Jaya for political stability on both sides of the border. Although the Papua New Guinea government has endeavoured to establish cordial relations with Indonesia and signed a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Respect and Cooperation in 1986, there is wide-spread empathy in Papua New Guinea for the fate of fellow Melanesians over the border.

In Australia, outside the government, there is concern over human rights and support for the right of self-determination for Melanesians in Irian Jaya.[25] The large scale border crossing and the death of the Irianese anthropologist Arnold Ap in 1984, together with the flight in 1986 of eleven Irianese refugees to Australian islands in the Torres Strait, served to re-focus Australian attention on Irian Jaya.

The second regional conflict to disturb Indonesian-Australian relations was Indonesia's opposition to the formation of Malaysia. President Sukarno opposed the new state, formed from the former British territories of Singapore, North Borneo and the Federation of Malaya in 1963, as an imperialist plot.

Australia was involved through its links with Britain and its desire to support an orderly process of decolonisation and the maintenance of pro-western governing elites. Although Australian troops fought Indonesian forces in Kalimantan (Borneo), the two governments were willing and able to isolate their differences concerning Malaysia from the other aspects of their relationship.

Indonesia appreciated Australian restraint in its support for Malaysia. Malaysia, unlike Irian Jaya and Timor, was not in that 'arch of islands' adjacent to the Australian continent. Malaysia did not evoke the same public concern in Australia.

Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia subsided after the abortive coup of 30 September, 1965 and the establishment of the New Order Government of President Suharto over the next year.

The Australian Government was relieved by the replacement of Sukarno, who was seen as unpredictable and adventurist in international affairs, by a strongly anti-communist regime intent on rehabilitating Indonesia's economy. Australia participated in international efforts to support the New Order Government's economic program through the International Governmental Group on Indonesia. Considering its wealth and preoccupation with communism, Australia's contribution was relatively minor.[26]

Despite the concerns of some groups in Australia about the manner in which the Suharto Government came to power and the mass killings which accompanied it, Australian governments, both Liberal and Labor, sought to establish cordial relations with Indonesia.

The Whitlam Labor government, in particular, established close relations with the Suharto Government, symbolised by the visit of Whitlam and Suharto in September 1974 to the Gua Semar Cave in Central Java. The cave is thought to be a dwelling place of Semar, who in the wayang theatre is the founder of the Javanese, and is a place of great spiritual significance. The meeting has been described as the most intimate gesture Suharto has made to any foreign leader.[27] Australia's relations with Indonesia were as close then as they had been at any time since the late 1940s.

Among the issues discussed by Suharto and Whitlam was the fate of East Timor. The two leaders are thought to have reached a tacit understanding that Indonesia would take over Timor.[28] East Timor is part of that 'arch of islands' and was a colony of Portugal. Australia had shown some interest in acquiring Timor from the Portuguese on the eve of the First World War and during the Second World War [29] Australians fought a guerilla campaign against the Japanese in Timor long after the Dutch forces had surrendered in the Indies.

The future status of East Timor had become an issue following the April 1974 coup in Lisbon. Until then, there had been little political activity in East Timor and Portuguese authority was not under challenge internally. However, the process of decolonisation begun by the Lisbon coup initiated a rapid process of development, with the creation of political groups with a variety of objectives — independence, self-government and incorporation with Indonesia. The rapid pace of political development in Timor during 1975 surprised the Australian and Indonesian governments and their direction, a strengthening of the pro-independence forces, was not as desired.

The Indonesian government wanted to integrate Portuguese Timor into its own territory. It feared the creation of an independent East Timor which could possibly become a source of instability and a base of support and refuge for its domestic opponents, both communist and regional. An independent East Timor might also provide an example for separatist aspirations in the Moluccas and Irian Jaya.

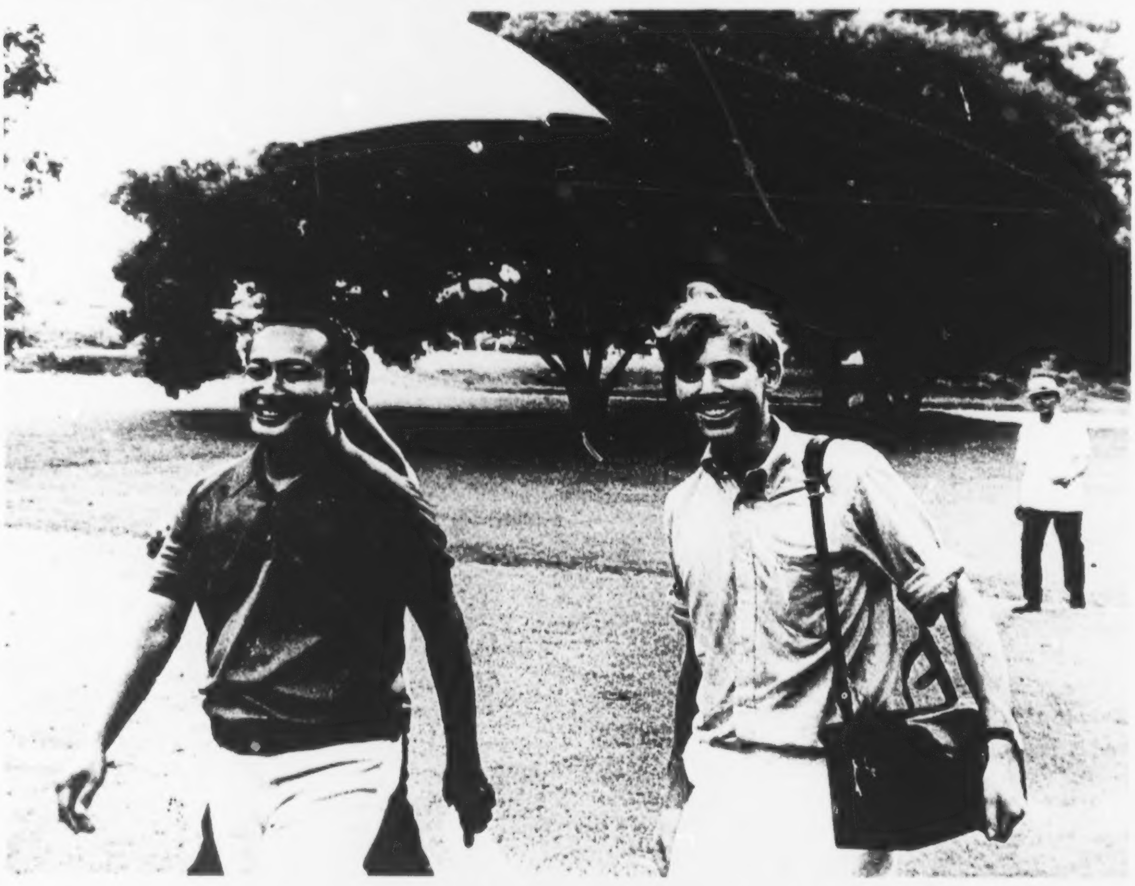
The incorporation of East Timor was to be facilitated through an Indonesian influenced act of self-determination. Indonesia hoped that the Portuguese authorities would maintain internal security while supporting incorporation. Difference within the leadership hinged on an assessment of Portugal's ability to maintain control and the international consequences of Indonesian military action if there was a disintegration of law and order or the emergence of a dominant pro-independence group.[30]

The rationale behind Whitlam's tacit understanding with President Suharto was that Portuguese Timor was an anachronism and really formed part of the Indonesian archipelago. A small state might be a source of regional instability. There should be a long process of decolonisation under Portuguese tutelage, given the lack of social and political development.

The desired outcome of this process was to be some form of association with Indonesia, which should be seen to be consistent with the wishes of the people of East Timor and achieved without the use of force by Indonesia. The focus of Australian government effort should be to maintain a long-term cooperative relationship with a strong and united Indonesia.

The pace and direction of developments during 1975 made the twin Australian objectives of self-determination and incorporation with Indonesia increasingly contradictory. In view of the potential difficulties, there was a desire to minimise Australian involvement.[31]

After military incursions from October 1975, an Indonesian attack on the East Timorese capital, Dili, took place on 7 December 1975. East Timor



Australian journalist David Jenkins with President Suharto at Rawamungun golf course in Jakarta. Jenkins later became the cause of a controversy after writing a newspaper article that alluded to the Suharto family's wealth.

謝 民
藥 房
Tình Hồng
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several hundred thousand of them in 1979.

But substantial numbers of Cambodian refugees remain in Thailand, victims of the political stalemate between the Cambodian factions, the ASEAN countries and Vietnam.

At the same time, the chain migration effect of earlier refugee entry was becoming substantial both through the Orderly Departure Policy and from other sources, so that while Indochinese refugee numbers declined, Indochinese migration numbers rose substantially.

Second, Australia was under pressure to take refugees from Afghanistan, Poland and other countries. Third, as Indochinese were now concentrating in settlements in Australia's major cities, there was an intermittent public debate on how they were settling, the costs of this to local communities and in welfare benefits and the prospects for their successful integration into Australian society.

This culminated in the public row in 1984 referred to earlier, when Professor Geoffrey Blainey, a respected historian, argued that Asians dominated migration now at the expense of Europeans, that Asians were experiencing settlement difficulties, and that Australians were generally opposed to more Asian migration.

The arguments raised by Professor Blainey have continued to surface since 1984 and politicians across the political spectrum have become more sensitive to these pressures. Aboriginal leader Charles Perkins called in 1988 for an end to 'migration from South-east Asia' and National Party Senator John Stone made statements broadly critical of Asian migration.

The facts on Indochina migration, though not widely appreciated, are clear. Indochinese, indeed Asians are a tiny minority of Australia's population which remains overwhelmingly dominated by Europeans. Less than 8,000 refugees from the whole of Asia now enter Australia every year. Migrants from the whole of Asia take up 30-40 percent of total annual migration (about 40,000 persons) and these are mostly the close relatives of those already here, or skilled persons and business migrants, often English speaking from South, South-East Asia, and East Asia.

It is very hard to argue that those Asians now formally became Indonesia's 27th province on 16 July 1976, following a petition from an East Timor 'Popular Assembly' to President Suharto.

The new Fraser Government initially expressed Australia's disapproval of Indonesia's military action and supported the right of self-determination of the Timorese people, but by the time President Suharto and Prime Minister Fraser met in October 1976, Australian opposition had ceased. Formal recognition of East Timor's incorporation followed in 1978. The recognition was confirmed by the Hawke Labor Government in 1985, despite the Labor Party's 1982 commitment to the inalienable right of the East Timorese to self-determination and independence. [32]

Timorese armed resistance to incorporation was significant and has persisted following the Indonesian occupation of the main urban centres. The loss of life in East Timor as a result of the incorporation and the Timorese resistance to it is the subject of controversy.

Indonesian sources estimate that between 15,000 and 50,000 people died as a result of the war. Timorese sources have argued that about half of the territory's population was destroyed by the Indonesian invasion forces. Estimates from the available census material suggest that there were about 200,000 fewer people living in East Timor in 1980 than would have been the case if conditions had been 'normal'.[33] The incorporation was also accompanied by declining agricultural production and famine.

The case of East Timor differs from the earlier regional conflicts in that there was no disagreement between the two governments as to policy objective — the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia. The difficulties between the governments arose because of the support in Australia for an independent East Timor.

The support came from trade unions, churches, aid organisations and former commandos as well as members of the major parties. A number of support groups were formed. The views of these groups found frequent expression in the media, particularly following the killing of five Australian newsmen in an Indonesian attack on the border town of Balibo in October 1975.

From the Australian government perspective, the strong Australian domestic support for an independent East Timor put at risk the government's ability to continue cooperative policies with Indonesia, particularly in defence, and its capacity to negotiate issues such as the sea-bed boundary in the 'Timor Gap', adjacent to East Timor. Australian domestic criticism and scrutiny of the incorporation could provoke an unfavourable Indonesian reaction, jeopardising the relationship in general.[34]

The adverse public reaction to Indonesian military action in East Timor, the killing of Australian newsmen and the struggle between the Timorese resistance and the Indonesians inhibited the ability of the Australian government to pursue policies which it considered in the national interest. The Indonesian government could not understand why its Australian counterpart could allow criticism from individuals and political groups to disturb their relationship.

One of the persistent characteristics of the Indonesian-Australian relations has been their importance in domestic Australian politics. The coalition of groups and interests which supports the East Timorese struggle for independence is not dissimilar in its composition and its political and ideological values from that which supported the Indonesian struggle against the Dutch in the 1940s. The trade unions responsible for the boycott of Dutch shipping opposed Indonesian actions in East Timor. The Timorese were supported in the 1970s, as were the Indonesians in the 1940s, from a commitment to the right of self-determination and anti-colonialism as well as a generalised sympathy for the 'under-dog' and an antipathy towards authoritarian regimes.

A similar consistency of world view is evident on the right of Australian politics among the strongly anti-communist groups. The National Civic Council, for example, strongly supported the Indonesian action in East Timor.

'It should be clear that unless Indonesia ultimately takes responsibility for East Timor, the probability is the ultimate establishment of a rudimentary type of communist state into which the Soviet or China or Vietnam will ultimately supply arms (as the two former have done in Africa). It would then become a Communist base, only 500 miles off Darwin.

'Since Australian (sic) is powerless, Mr Whitlam is reduced to hoping that the Indonesians will do what Australia cannot do. Australian participation is based on Indonesian "capability" politically and military (sic): hardly a good long term policy.'[35]

Twenty-five years earlier *News-Weekly* had been sympathetic to the right of self-determination of the South Moluccans:

'The latest civil war to bring chaos to Indonesia since the Dutch withdrawal is in the South Moluccas, a few hundred miles north of Australia. Local politicians with some popular support appear to have united and declared their secession from the Indonesian Union controlled by Sukarno in Jakarta and Union troops have closed in on their lairs. The revolt will probably be quelled with much brutality and the Moluccas will probably have to be content with their lot under a corrupt administration on another island instead of their own. The end of Dutch rule in Indonesia so much favoured by misguided leftists in Australia has given the country the greatest scourge it ever had. The Dutch were not angels, but they ran things fairly.'[36]

In contrast, Rupert Lockwood, the chronicler of the boycott of Dutch shipping, characterised the Republic of the South Moluccas as a thinly disguised Dutch attempt to subvert the Indonesian Republic. He was equally critical of the belated and clumsy Australian Government attempt to supply radios and/or arms to the South Moluccans in 1952.[37]

The National Civic Council had also supported the Australian Government's stand on West New Guinea. 'If we do not support the Dutch,' it wrote, 'we will leave ourself open to northern infiltration into New Guinea proper. If we do not wake up to the existence of this northern menace we will be endangering the lives of ourselves and our children. The young nationalist movements in the north are peppered with Marxist Communist ideologies — and the hand of Moscow is tightening its grip in an ever increasing sphere.'[38]

The Council's principal concern was with the containment of communist influence. *News-Weekly* editions of the early 1950s are replete with maps of the 'gravitational' southward flow of communist influence from China and the Soviet Union through Indonesia. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the Council perceived the Dutch as a more effective barrier to communist influence than the newly independent Republican governments, which it considered weak, corrupt and susceptible to communist influence and take-over. The New Order Government is strongly supported and is seen as providing an effective barrier against communist influences.

It would seem that many groups in Australia are not overly concerned with 'Indonesia', the character of its government or society, nor with the nature of the opponents of Indonesian governments, except in so far as they inform established ideological frameworks.

It is not possible to describe such groups as consistently pro or anti 'Indonesia'; rather their attitudes towards Indonesia vary with how the Indonesian government of the day, and its opponents, are classified within established world views. The ideological foundations to Australian attitudes towards Indonesia are universalist in character, presupposing their applicability and acceptability irrespective of Indonesian values and interests.

This framework for much of public attitude formation poses difficulties for those in government and academia, who consider it is in Australia's strategic interest to maintain and foster close and cordial relations with Indonesia, regardless of the character of the regime. Indeed, Australians are urged to be sensitive to the particular values of the Indonesian government in order not to cause offence and disrupt relations between governments.

The most celebrated recent case where offence was given to the Indonesian Government and relations were severely disrupted was the *Sydney Morning Herald* front page article by David Jenkins on the financial affairs of the Suharto family.[39] The article is thought to have contravened the norms of acceptable comment in Indonesia through its direct criticism of the President.

The article in no way represented the views of the Australian government, yet it precipitated the cancellation of a senior Indonesian Ministerial visit, the cancellation of visa-free entry of Australian tourists to Bali for a couple of days and a strong attack on Australia by the Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, in which, inter alia, he rejected the prospect of future defence cooperation.[40] Indonesian restrictions on Australian journalists, pre-dating the Jenkins article, have remained in force.

Relations between the governments remained cool for more than two years. The Australian Government became disenchanted with Indonesia. It was felt that Indonesia had not appreciated its efforts in modifying Labor Party policy on East Timor, which had enabled the confirmation of the Fraser Government's formal recognition of East Timor's integration.

Prime Minister Hawke described the Indonesian reactions to the Jenkins article as 'capricious' and leaked Government documents revealed that, even before the Jenkins article, Foreign Minister Hayden had noted that: ' There is no doubt about it, the Indonesians are erratic, hostile people to deal with, with an added sententiousness which makes them difficult neighbours'.[41]

The Jenkins article was shortly followed by the release of the *Dibb Report on Australian Defence Forces Structure*, in which the Indonesian archipelago was identified as a potential source or channel of conventional threat, however unlikely such a threat might be assessed. The seemingly irrational Indonesian reaction to the Jenkins article may have inadvertently served to heighten Australian public apprehension about Indonesia. Opinion polls indicated that Indonesia had been promoted on the list of potential threats with some 40 percent expecting an Indonesian threat.[42]

The study of Indonesia in Australian universities, colleges and schools has been thought of as one of the great assets in promoting cordial relations between the two countries.[43] However, in 1984 Subagio Sastrowardoyo, a poet who had taught Indonesian Studies in Australia, wrote an article in the leading Indonesian daily, *Kompas*, portraying Indonesian Studies in Australia as centres of anti-Indonesian feeling.

The majority of the students graduate with a negative picture of Indonesia. They are unable to recognise positive attributes or acknowledge Indonesia's good intentions. The negative image generated by the centres of Indonesian studies influences public opinion and the media. One reason Subagio cited was that Indonesia is usually studied from a sociological, economic or political perspective and when art and literature are studied it is from these perspectives.[44] In the subsequent debate some of Subagio's former colleagues endeavoured to clarify the nature, diversity of disciplines and variety of political opinions found in centres of Indonesian studies in Australia.

The Jenkins affair and the Subagio critique have one thing in common. David Jenkins and the academics, who teach and research at Australia's centres of Indonesian studies, are among the more knowledgeable Australians about Indonesian affairs and, presumably, conversant with the prevailing norms and conventions in Indonesia. Yet, on the basis of these controversies, if relations between Indonesia and Australia are to be dependent on the respect Australians, outside government, show towards prevailing norms and conventions in Indonesia the prognosis cannot be optimistic.

The political relationship began to emerge from the long shadow cast by the Jenkins affair during 1988. There appeared to be renewed awareness from both sides that the relationship was too important to be allowed to be disrupted by factors outside the respective governments. In October of that year Senator Gareth Evans visited Indonesia shortly after he replaced Hayden as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. The occasion of the visit was used to sign a joint statement about the long-negotiated common exploitation of oil and gas in the Timor Gap.

When the agreement was finalised a year later, Evans described it as:

> '... the most substantial bilateral agreement concluded in the forty year history of our relations with Indonesia ... the time has come to go beyond preoccupation with the atmospherics of our relationship, taking its temperature, and to concentrate rather on the practical business of developing areas of mutual interest and mutual profit between Australia and Indonesia. The basic principle of the treaty is that Australia and Indonesia will share equally in the benefits flowing from the exploration for and exploitation of petroleum resources in the joint development area ...'[45]

Evans' visit established the tone for developments during 1989. His counterpart Ali Alatas visited Australia in March, the first Foreign Minister to do so since 1985. The Australian Government used that opportunity to announce the establishment of the Australia-Indonesia Institute. The Institute would seek to further develop people-to-people contact, complement activities at the government level and give new breadth, depth and vigour to the relationship.[46]

With the establishment of the Institute there is an attempt to overcome the antipathy and apprehension felt in some sections of Australian society towards Indonesia through the promotion of Indonesian language and culture as well as to increase awareness of Australia among Indonesians through the teaching of English and promotion of Australian culture. Particular emphasis has been given to improving media relations, reflecting continued Indonesian preoccupation with Australian media coverage. One of the first projects supported by the Institute was a visit to Indonesia by a group of media students from the Charles Sturt University.

Indonesian ministerial visits to Australia reached an all-time high when three senior ministers attended the Asia Pacific Economic cooperation meeting in Canberra in November 1989. Indonesia, like other ASEAN nations, had responded cautiously to Prime Minister Hawke's initiative, reflecting a concern that ASEAN might be subsumed within a larger regional grouping. The attendance of such a senior Indonesian delegation and Indonesian support for the conference's modest progress give some indication of the rapid improvement in relations during 1988-9. It would appear that Indonesia and Australia are being drawn together by a common interest in participating in economic developments in the Asia Pacific region.

The two governments have also shown in their management of difficult issues a far more understanding, flexible and cooperative approach. Neither the death of British-Australian yachtsman, David Blenkinsop, in waters off Irian Jaya, the activities of Indonesian fishermen in Australian waters, the leaking of Bill Hayden's uncomplimentary margin notes about Indonesia, the reported, perhaps misreported, comments of Lt General L.G. O'Donnell on Australian support for Papua New Guinea in the event of armed conflict with Indonesia, nor the criticism of Australian defence policy by retired General Hasnan Habib have been allowed to disrupt the diplomatic relationship. The last years of the 1980s saw a much greater preparedness to distinguish the substance of the relationship from the irritants.

Australian relations with Indonesia are conducted within the context of apparent geographic proximity and political and cultural difference. Until the second world war there was remarkably little interaction between the two peoples. The exception of the Macassan trepang trade in Marege illustrates the point.

The two countries were part of different imperial systems. The consolidation of the colonial states in the Netherlands Indies and Australia hindered rather than fostered relations. The war and the subsequent Indonesian struggle for independence, transformed the relationship into one which has been complex, intimate and volatile. The relationship has been predominantly political, with 'Jakarta' and 'Canberra' as the managers. From the Australian side there has been a preoccupation with defence and security issues.

Australian support for Indonesia during the struggle against the Dutch created the expectation that a special relationship was possible. In retrospect, this expectation was based on a selective reading of history and may have made it more difficult to acknowledge and manage the difficulties that have emerged.

The relationship has been dominated by the regional conflicts in Irian Jaya, Malaysia and East Timor and the Jenkins affair. The latter two have not involved differences between the two governments, yet have profoundly affected the relationship. The governments have been unwilling or unable to isolate them from the conduct of the relationship in general as has been accomplished during the West New Guinea dispute and the Malaysian Confrontation.

Relations with Indonesia have frequently been an issue in Australian domestic politics. Beginning with the waterfront workers' boycott of Dutch shipping, Australians have taken an active interest in the affairs of the archipelago.

No Australian government since the war has been able to conduct relations with Indonesia on a purely government to government basis, insulated from Australian domestic opinion. With a background of the residual fear of the 'yellow peril', the formation of Australian public attitudes towards Indonesia has been influenced by established ideological frameworks rather than the strategic interest of maintaining long-term relations with Indonesia.

Australia has experienced difficulty accommodating the emergence of Indonesia as a significant regional power, particularly as Australia assumes a relatively minor place in Indonesian strategic considerations. The Indonesian leadership has become self confident and, in its relations with Australia, has asserted that it should be judged by its own values rather than the universalist values Australians frequently express.

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INDOCHINESE REFUGEES AND AUSTRALIA

Nancy Viviani

Since 1975, when Saigon and Phnom Penh were taken over by the communists, about 120,000 people from Indochina have come to Australia. Most of these have come from Vietnam, while smaller numbers have come from Laos and Cambodia. The majority of these people have been refugees but they also include migrants from Vietnam joining their families in Australia.

In the 1986 Census, these people from Indochina formed less than one percent of a population of more than 16 million Australians. If we add the numbers of migrants from other Asian countries such as India, the Philippines and Malaysia, then the Asian born proportion of our population is now around two to three percent.

Despite the fact that the Indochinese are a tiny minority in Australia, there has been an intermittent debate since 1975 about these people entering and settling in Australia. This debate has merged into an argument about Asians in our migration program and more broadly about their place in Australian society.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey brought this debate to the forefront in 1984 by raising questions about the proportion of Asians in Australia's migration program and whether the racial composition and the cultural values of Australia were being changed too quickly and with insufficient public understanding or support. Bruce Ruxton of the Victorian RSL has over several years called for a referendum to be held on Asian migration and this has found some support in public opinion polls. As part of a general review of migration, the government-appointed FitzGerald inquiry reported on these questions in 1988, and the government has reaffirmed the non-discriminatory basis of migration policy.

In this way Indochinese migration is part of the politics of migration in Australia and a part of the political discussion about the kind of Australia we will have next century. It is a part of thinking about how we will define ourselves as Australians.

But this is only one perspective on the Indochinese. This chapter argues that a broader historical perspective is important in an understanding of what we think about this Asian migration to Australia. Thus it looks at why the Indochinese are here, and who they are, as well as looking at their situation in Australian society.

The story of the Indochinese countries — Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos — in the post-war period is one of nationalism and communism, of a struggle for independence and the enmeshing of these national conflicts in the wider confrontation of the Cold War.

The early post-war era in Asia saw strong nationalist movements for independence challenging the continuing rule of the imperial powers. These powers either negotiated their way out of their colonies, as with the British in India and Malaya, or sustained military defeats at the hands of these independence movements, as in the case of the Dutch forces in Indonesia and the French in Vietnam.

In fact, the French had persisted longest in the forcible attempt to reimpose their rule in Vietnam after the war and it was not until the crushing defeat of the French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, that the Vietnamese revolutionary forces prevailed.

Because the Vietnamese independence struggle had been so long and so violent, and because the independence movement, though united in the struggle to get rid of the French, was divided on what kind of government was to be created, a clear legacy of political division was created in the country. When these political divisions found outside backing in an ideological struggle waged for wider goals, the stage was set for a further long conflict.

After the defeat of the French, the Geneva Conference of 1954 divided Vietnam 'temporarily' into two zones, with the communists in control

China
Hanoi
Laos
Thailand
Vietnam
Cambodia
Gulf of Siam
Saigon
South China Sea
Malaysia
Indonesia

in the North and the anti-communists in control in the South. Sihanouk came to power in an independent Cambodia while a weak western-aligned government balanced opposing factions in Laos.

The division of Vietnam had resulted in a massive movement of people — around 800,000 anti-communist Vietnamese moved to the South, while a much smaller number moved North. The 'temporary' division of Vietnam endured. National elections were not held, and those in power in each part of Vietnam earnestly and with varying degrees of coercion and violence set about consolidating their regimes.

In this period of the 1950s and 1960s, rivalry and antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union and China was at its height. From the point of view of US policy makers, the communist bloc was set on world domination — by the Soviet Union in Europe and by China in Asia. Hence the emergence of the 'domino theory' as the symbol and text of the Cold War in Asia: should one Asian country 'fall' to communism then others would be placed under increasing pressure through communist subversion and assistance to domestic communist movements from China and the Soviet Union. In this way, Vietnam became a test case for United States' willpower in 'holding the line' against communism in Asia.

From the point of view of China, the support of national liberation movements — what the Americans called communist subversion — was certainly an important foreign policy objective. On the other hand, the accusation that territorial expansion was China's central aim lacked credibility as China's withdrawal from Korea, and its caution in action on Taiwan, for example, showed. China was much more concerned with its internal economic and political problems and with the deterioration in its relationships with the USSR, which resulted finally in the Sino-Soviet split of the early and mid 1960s.

Yet the western perception of a China bent on territorial expansion south into Asia (and Australia) and the Chinese perception of an America intent on domination of the newly independent Asian states and encirclement of China, set the context for the conversion of domestic political struggles in the nations of Indochina into Cold War test cases resulting in massive intervention by foreign powers.

While the communists under Ho Chi Minh had been able to consolidate their rule in North Vietnam after 1954, the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam was under constant and increasing political challenge throughout the 1950s. Pressure from the Buddhists, religious sects and the communists resulted in their political repression by Diem. Reinforcement of the southern communist forces from the north and the founding of the National Liberation Front in 1960 set the scene for prolonged and complex conflict.

By 1962 the Americans were already heavily involved in South Vietnam, through the supply of aid, war material and in providing a group of military advisers to the forces of the government of South Vietnam. Australia had been persuaded to add a group of 30 military advisers to the American effort. Other western countries had proved unenthusiastic about supporting the government of South Vietnam despite American presentation of the situation there as a test case for upholding democracy and anti-communism.

Despite this American backing, the Diem regime fell in 1963 and Diem himself was assassinated. There followed a period of acute political confusion as various factions, principally from the army, fought for control of government. In these circumstances the communists made important gains politically and militarily, and by 1965, the American administration of President Johnson had to face the likelihood of the collapse of its protege government and the possibility of a communist victory.

Faced with these choices, and in the dominating Cold War climate of opinion, the American government opted for the intervention of American troops to prop up the failing war effort of a divided government of South Vietnam.

The prevention of a communist takeover in South Vietnam became a central objective of US foreign policy, and the crux of its cold war strategy vis a vis China and the USSR. Yet the Americans did not want this intervention to be seen as a unilateral action by a superpower.

As with the Korean War, the United States looked for the support of its Western and Asian allies and thus sought, through a 'fly all flags' diplomatic campaign, to gain backing for this military intervention. No European country, neither US ally Britain, or France, nor other western countries could be persuaded to support the action. It was only Australia and New Zealand, Thailand and South Korea who offered token military support and diplomatic backing for the US undertaking.

At one level, it is not surprising that, as all of these countries were US allies in Asia (Australia and NZ were bound to the US under ANZUS and SEATO, and Thailand and South Korea bound to the US through security treaties), these countries would offer at least token support as part of the obligations inherent in alliances.

In the late 1960s the Australian army drafted pop star Normie Rowe and tried to do an 'Elvis' with him when they sent him to Vietnam. This publicity shot shows the singer with a young Vietnamese girl in Phoc Toy Province.

At another level, the governments of each of these countries, and Australia in particular, believed as strongly as the Americans in the cause of the prevention of communist domination in Vietnam and the holding back of Chinese influence and expansion. Each of these countries perceived itself as under threat from communism and China and each saw the US as the only effective guarantor of its security. To these governments it was perfectly apparent that, in order to ensure that the US remained a strong military presence in the region and remained committed to their security, they would have to give diplomatic and military support to the US military intervention in South Vietnam.

There is an ongoing debate in Australia as to the evidence of the motives for Australian involvement in the Vietnam War. Some writers maintain that the Americans pushed Australia into sending troops. Others argue that we egged the Americans on in their commitment and there is evidence for both these positions at various times, although the whole story is still to be told.

What is certain is that the Australian government *and people* in 1965 did fear an expansionist China, did give credence to the domino theory and did believe that a commitment of troops was necessary to bind the US to the protection of Australian security. It is these beliefs that underlay the decision by the Australian government to commit combat troops to Vietnam in April 1965. The lack of an initial specific request for Australian troops by the government of South Vietnam was not seen as a serious impediment to the decision to send troops, given these preoccupations.

The American military commitment to Vietnam grew inexorably over the following years until it reached in excess of half a million soldiers. American domestic political support for this military commitment declined just as inexorably as the military effort showed no clear cut results, as casualties mounted, as the draft divided the nation and as the purposes for which the war was fought became widely questioned. By 1968, President Johnson was virtually forced to concede political defeat on the issue and Richard Nixon was elected on the basis of a withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam.

In Australia, the majority domestic support for Australia's commitment of troops ebbed later but in a similar way. Conscription for overseas service, which was introduced in 1964, proved extremely divisive in Australian politics and eroded support for the government.

The deaths of almost 500 Australian soldiers and the maimings, though small in number in comparison with those of the Vietnamese and Americans, had a continuing political impact in the replay of the war on the nightly TV news. The clear cut verities of the communism versus anti-communism dichotomy became more cloudy in the political debate, and the government's accusation that the opponents of the war were pro-communists become steadily less credible.

In short, the political balance shifted from 1968 and the country divided over the issue of conscription and sending troops to Vietnam. Part of this was a generational change indicated by the political influence of youth in the moratorium movement. Part was an ideological shift as the Sino-Soviet split forced a reconsideration of 'monolithic communism'. Part of the change was a result of the US back off from Vietnam in 1968, following the Tet offensive, which had a rapid and profound effect on Australian public opinion.

The anti-war movement gained strong momentum in Australia, but the conservative government kept one step behind the American withdrawal. Returning troops were not replaced and the military effort gave way to a civil aid task force.

By December 1972, when the ALP came to power under Gough Whitlam, it remained to bring this group home, and to claim vindication for the Labor party stance of opposition to intervention that had stood for a decade. Conscription was abolished and draft resisters released from gaol.

This experience, what Australians call in shorthand the experience of 'Vietnam', is a powerful symbol in pre and post 1972 Australian politics. 'Vietnam' could signify whether you stood on the right or left of politics, whether you were part of that 'sea change' between generations, whether you were a hawk or dove about military intervention and by extension it was often related to what you believed about land rights, uranium and women's liberation.

Vietnam stands thus as a symbol of division in Australia and this is its enduring legacy for Indo-

Legendary Australian photo journalist Neil Davis, whose liking for staying close to the action eventually resulted in his death. Here he is with South Vietnamese troops in the Mekong Delta, 1972.

chinese refugees in this country. But of course in a broader perspective this 'Vietnam' is a kind of Australian (and American) fiction. The common tendency for peoples at the edge of a great international confrontation to see their roles dominating the foreground is only a sliver of reality.

The broader reality is that, despite the struggle, blood and treasure committed by the foreigners, and more importantly by the government in the south, the communists prevailed and Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were in 1975 ruled by communist regimes. Over the next decade at least two million people from Indochina became refugees, displaced persons, or crossed borders, voluntarily or involuntarily.

At this point in early 1975, the ethical issues for those countries involved in the Vietnam war shifted. For the Americans, those people leaving Vietnam were anti-communists by definition, and thus the US not only expected but wanted to take hundreds of thousands of them. In Australia, the political balance on this moral issue was different, since a government was in power that not only had opposed military intervention in Vietnam but supported the new regime in power there.

The Whitlam Labor government was in power when Saigon fell in April 1975 and it was quite reluctant to contemplate the entry of substantial numbers of Vietnamese refugees to Australia. While it permitted the entry of orphans from Vietnam, and allowed some Vietnamese with family and other ties to Australia to enter before 30 April, its unwillingness to do more derived from several considerations.

First, Gough Whitlam believed that the US had the main responsibility for those Vietnamese who left, because of its role in the war which the ALP had opposed. Thus he was willing to take only those Vietnamese, outside Vietnam, who had close ties with Australia.

Second, Whitlam wanted normalisation, not polarisation in South-East Asia and believed that, if a united Vietnam could be integrated into a new order in the region, this would be a major political advance and would itself slow refugee flows.

Finally, Whitlam was reluctant to take large numbers of anti-communist Vietnamese fearing further divisiveness among Australians on grounds of race and the bitter legacy of the war. Concern that a revival of the kind of cold war politics that had helped keep the Labor Party out of power for many years before 1972 would reemerge with the refugees was strong in several quarters of the ALP.

The Labor government's reluctance to take significant numbers of Vietnamese refugees drew strong criticism from pro-refugee groups in Australia. They pressed hard, with some success, for an increase in entry numbers, arguing that Australia had moral obligations to do its part in resettling refugees because it was a signatory to the international Refugee Convention, that we had a special obligation because of our role in the Vietnam War and that in any case we had a humanitarian role to play because we were a country of migration.

In addition, the ASEAN countries, where refugees were arriving in substantial numbers, pressed Australia to take refugees. In 1975, only about 1,000 Vietnamese refugees entered Australia, causing little opposition from a largely acquiescent public opinion influenced by pro-refugee humanitarian arguments.

The Whitlam government was sacked in late 1975 and was succeeded by the Fraser conservative coalition. This government was also reluctant to take significant numbers of refugees as it believed the refugee crisis of 1975 was over and it did not want to encourage domestic debate on the issue.

Thus, despite domestic and foreign pressures in favour of entry, the Fraser government allowed less than 900 Indochinese refugees to enter in 1976, and these were mainly people achieving family reunion. This was the end of the first phase of debate on refugee entry.

The issue of Indochinese refugees returned to the political agenda with a vengeance in late 1977. Boats carrying Vietnamese refugees began to arrive on Australia's northern shores in the latter months of 1977 — at one point on a daily basis.

Malaysia, growing weary of the continued arrival of boat refugees on its shores and low rates of resettlement by western countries, encouraged boat people to journey farther. These boats were not welcome in Singapore or Indonesia and set out for Australia. Some enterprising Vietnamese set out directly from Vietnam for Australia, calling at ports in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia on their perilous journey.

These countries were under growing pressure from rising numbers of refugees and this held the seeds of the problem of a permanent refugee population. Thus, these countries directed boats onwards. Replenished with food and water and resupplied with fuel, some 2,000 boat people arrived unannounced on Australia's doorstep from late 1977 into mid 1978, and eventually precipitated a political crisis.

Local opposition, particularly in Darwin, and sensational headlines warning of floods of refugees, spurred the Fraser government, which was facing an election in November 1977, to action. For the first time the government set a quota for refugee entry and then negotiated with Indonesia to hold boat people with the promise of undertaking their resettlement in an orderly fashion.

The unannounced arrivals had provoked all kinds of inchoate fears among Australians and their arrival had worked to convert an acquiescent public opinion on refugee entry into a vaguely hostile one. Australians worried about this 'peaceful invasion' and the end of their splendid isolation. They were concerned about the ease with which these boats reached Australia undetected, they were worried about quarantine and about whether these people were 'real' refugees. While it was clear that some were fisherfolk who had sailed from Vietnam, others were apparently well off middle class people from Saigon.

It was in this climate of domestic opinion that the Fraser government then had to deal with the exodus of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam which began in mid 1978 and lasted through to July 1979.

The closure of private business in Vietnam in March 1978 had provoked a massive departure of ethnic Chinese (along with ethnic Vietnamese) engaged in private trade. This flow rose when relations between China and Vietnam broke down in a serious dispute over the treatment of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, over border problems between Vietnam and China and most particularly over the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia.

The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in December 1978 and China's retaliation in February 1979, added enormously to the already massive flow of refugees from Vietnam and the ASEAN countries, particularly Malaysia, found themselves in a crisis situation with floods of refugee arrivals on their coasts. At the same time very large flows of refugees across the Cambodian border into Thailand added a new dimension to the problem which was exacerbated by continuing military conflict on the Cambodian border.

The Fraser government's reaction to these events was threefold. It condemned trenchantly what it saw as Vietnam's expulsion of its ethnic minority and joined this charge to a condemnation of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. These diplomatic acts were reinforced by cutting off Australian aid to Vietnam. Second, it supported the ASEAN countries as strongly as it could in seeking to restrain Vietnam, both on the refugee issue and on Cambodia. Finally, the Fraser government played a significant diplomatic role in persuading resettlement countries (particularly those in Europe) to agree to raise their entry quotas for refugees from Vietnam, at the successful July 1979 Geneva Conference on refugees.

(The story of these events can be found in N. Viviani, 1984, *The Long Journey: Vietnamese Migration and Settlement in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, p. 29ff. For a fuller treatment see Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, 1984, *Red Brotherhood at War*, Verso, London, and Nayan Chanda, 1986, *Brother Enemy*, Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, New York.)

Australia itself established a refugee quota of 15,000 for 1979 and maintained this in 1980. The 'moratorium' on refugee departure undertaken by Vietnam in July 1979, the promise of a quarter of a million resettlement places by the US and western countries in Geneva, and the later institution of the orderly departure program from Vietnam marked the end of this period of crisis.

The Fraser government had been able to gain domestic support for its policy through two means. The media attention given the human tragedy of the crisis strengthened the pro-refugee entry groups who worked to maintain a positive public opinion. Polls on refugee entry hovered around the 50 percent support mark in this period, and this has to be seen in the light of a majority opinion in other polls favouring both lower migration in total for economic reasons *and* a non-discriminatory migration policy. Fraser's refugee policy also found bipartisan support and he was able to draw on an elite consensus favouring refugee entry.

The significance of this second period of refugee entry policy lay in the realisation that Australia was now not only a resettling country but a country of first asylum for refugees.

Its shores could be reached with relative ease by small boats individually organised, and the spectre of an organised traffic in refugees in large boats — such as the ASEAN countries experienced with the *Hai Hong* and *Skyluck* —meant that a collective approach to the problem of refugee outflow and entry in concert with the ASEAN countries became the core of Australia's refugee entry policy. The end of Australia's 'splendid isolation' was at hand.

In the period from 1982 to the present, Australian policy has shifted in some quite complex ways, influenced by a general debate about the impact of migration on the Australian economy and a discussion of social change in Australia.

First, in 1982, Australia began to reduce the number of refugees from Indochina in response to a perception that 'easy' entry to resettlement countries was encouraging departures from Vietnam of people who could not qualify as political refugees (the 'economic' refugee argument).

There was also a judgement that total western resettlement commitments would clear the ASEAN camps (of Vietnamese refugees at least) over a reasonable period. In 1987, for example, there were only some 20,000 Vietnamese boat people left in ASEAN refugee camps as compared with settled in Australia should be denied the family reunion of close relatives when the British, Italian and other migrants have had it before them. Similarly, the argument that future migration should be based principally on previous migration flows is racially discriminatory in effect. An argument that English language should be the principal criterion for entry, is not only racist in intent, but gives preference to Indians and Malaysians say, as against Japanese and Thais.

In short, a migration program that compromises on issues such as these should be seen in its true colours, as having abandoned the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of race.

What is missing from much of the debate on the Blainey question is the ethical and international dimensions. We are on safe ground in assuming that Australians generally support the entry of a 'fair share' of refugees, and that Australian governments will continue to abide by international refugee conventions.

Given this, refugee entry should have privileged status in the debate on migration, and an acceptance of its attendant consequences — lower, or higher, skills (depending on the nature of the exodus), family reunion problems and so on. This moral element has been largely excised from the public debate and to its detriment.

Further, Australians often miss the wider international dimension of this issue. Much of the debate about Asian migration is cast in unrealistic terms. There can never be a return to 'white Australia': the movements of peoples across international borders in this region and the related international pressures ensure that. An enclave future for Australia is an impossibility in economic, political and migration terms.

The real question is how the migration program is to be managed between refugees and migrants, between skilled migrants, business migrants and family reunion. The outcomes on these questions, as always, will be a result of the contending political forces of industry, trade unions and ethnic groups and the battle between self interest and international obligations.

That the Hawke government, treading carefully in the wake of the Blainey debate, was sensitive to these considerations was apparent in 1984. After more than a decade of historically low migration levels (only increased in 1981 and 1982 by Indochinese refugees), the government embarked on a significant planned increase in annual migration targets for economic reasons.

The government concluded that, in general, migration had a positive or neutral effect on employment and that it resulted in gains to the Australian economy over time. It therefore decided to raise migration in the business and labour shortage categories, and to apply employment based criteria more strongly in the area of family migration .

The increase in the total migration level did not mean the entry of a higher proportion of refugees. It meant a shift in the major objective of Australian migration policy from refugee entry and family reunion to the contribution that migration can make to the Australian economy in terms of skills and capital. While the central plank of the policy, non-discrimination on racial grounds, remains intact, the new emphasis on economic criteria affects Indochinese seeking to enter Australia on grounds other than refugee status.

To sum up, Australian migration and refugee entry policy has undergone a complete revolution in the last decade: from a period of relatively low migration based on family reunion, through a bulging out in response to the demand to take Indochinese refugees, to the institution of a more selective and higher level of migration based on economic determinants.

How will Australia respond to any new acute refugee exodus from Asia or the Pacific? For any Australian government in future, that will be more difficult in domestic political terms than in the past, because the balance in domestic opinion has shifted somewhat. The pro-refugee lobby remains strong, but the anti-refugee and anti-Asian lobby has grown over the last decade. Much will depend on Australians' perceptions of how well the current Indochinese are adapting to Australia and on the state of the Australian economy at the time.

It is important to look at this process from two viewpoints: that of the Australian government and its policies on settlement and that of the expectations and reality of Indochinese experiences.

Australian government policy needs to be set in its historical context. Unlike many traditional refugee settling countries, Australia has continued to be a country seeking immigrants throughout the post-war period.

In the first decades after the war, Australian governments had a policy of assimilation of new settlers, that is an emphasis on these immigrants' adoption of English, of Australian cultural norms and behaviour and of loyalty to the political institutions of Australia. This shifted in the 1970s to a policy favouring integration, accepting cultural diversity but still emphasising loyalty to Australian political institutions and values.

This shift was in part an inevitable outcome of the influence of ethnic groups who wanted to maintain their cultural heritages but it was, just as importantly, evidence of an acceptance by the Australian-born of the contribution of migrants to Australia and of the benefits of cultural diversity in their community. This shift resulted in the adoption of a quasi-ideology of multiculturalism in policy terms and an increase in government financial support for ethnic communities and migrant settlement.

While Australia remains an ethnically diverse country, something of a backlash against multiculturalism has become apparent. This in part derives from a 'digestion' problem; many ethnic groups have arrived in Australia over a very short period of one generation, East Europeans, Italians, Greeks, Arabs, Vietnamese, Poles, Africans, Chinese, to name just a few.

The change also derives from a quite common Australian value that equity is important, but special favours to particular groups are a political problem. But it is also part of the ongoing process of redefining national identity, in which Australians, while accepting the place of their country in the Asian region and their ethnic diversity, do not want to relinquish their British and European cultural heritage.

The pendulum in this swung quite wide between the 1960s and 1970s and now is swinging back: there is no general move to return to assimi-

Pra Saneh, a monk at Wat Dhammarangsee, Melbourne's first Buddhist monastery, opened in 1984. Its establishment was a cooperative venture of Thai, Sri Lankan, Cambodian, Laotian, Malaysian, Indian and Australian Buddhists.

lation, though the increased pressure for English is a sign in that direction but integration has a new stress on the need for migrants (including refugees) to adopt Australian political and social norms.

In general terms, this shift has had little to do with Indochinese refugees, but in their living in the community it has everything to do with the values that Australians attach to the nature of their settlement.

What are the expectations of Indochinese about their settlement in Australia? They have three major preoccupations: family reunion, economic security and social mobility.

On the first, it is common that refugees do not really begin the settlement process until they are certain of the situation of their family members, and it is for this reason that the Australian government since the late 1970s has selected family groups to settle, and has attempted through the orderly departure program and other means, to provide family reunion.

On the other hand, family reunion for Indochinese means the extended or joint family and to the Australian government that means restrictions on chain migration. In the final analysis, refugees, like migrants, settle better if they have their families with them. This may or may not contribute much to a skills-based migration program, but it makes for fewer social problems. In this, as in most things, the time frame is important and these competing needs can be balanced over time.

On the expectation of economic security, Indochinese can achieve a basic minimum level without severe difficulty in Australia. They are eligible for unemployment benefits, family allowances and free health care as soon as they arrive and this puts a floor under their needs and makes it possible for most Indochinese families to manage. Despite widespread community perceptions, these benefits, which are available to all Australians, are not accompanied by large special subsidies.

Family reunion and economic security, however, are bare minimum needs, and Indochinese expectations and the realities of social mobility, employment, learning English, finding a good education for their children and making a life in Australia are much more complex.

The results of the 1986 Australian census give some good information on the employment situation of the three Indochinese communities in Australia: the Vietnamese, Kampucheans and Lao.

First, the capacity of Indochinese to get jobs is primarily dependent on availability of jobs and the length of their settlement in Australia. Most Indochinese arrived in Australia in the period after 1979 and the largest numbers in 1981. The early 1980s were a period of economic recession and collapse of some particular labour markets (e.g. in manufacturing) that had traditionally supplied jobs to migrants. Thus, Indochinese arriving in the 1980s were disadvantaged vis-a-vis earlier arrivals and jobs were hard to get. The labour force participation rates of Indochinese are similar to those of the Australian born at around 65-70 percent.

While the general unemployment rate in Australia has hovered around eight percent in the 1980s, immigrants have had higher rates of unemployment, and Indochinese refugees still higher rates. Rates of unemployment of 20 to 40 percent for Indochinese have been recorded in particular localities, and in the 1986 census an unemployment rate for Vietnamese settlers of 35 percent was recorded.

Unemployment rates among Indochinese refugees tend to decline with length of settlement, but the continuing replenishment of these communities through family reunion kept unemployment rates up in the 1980s. It is noticeable that many young, well educated Indochinese have done very well in tertiary studies and high status employment. On the other hand, older Indochinese without English language find it difficult generally to find employment.

A particular problem is youth unemployment among Indochinese. Generally high rates of youth unemployment in Australia are exacerbated for Indochinese. Education may be blocked through lack of English or gaps in school, and tertiary education has competitive entry. Those who do enter university often do outstandingly well but these are the minority. Unemployed, alienated Indochinese youth are a problem to their families and their ethnic communities.

Among Vietnamese there are two ethnic groups, the ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese. Among ethnic Vietnamese, a process of class mobility is evident. While many ethnic Vietnamese have factory jobs or are unemployed, there is evidence among the former middle class of at least partial regaining of that status, through mastery of English and education which allows entry to white collar jobs.

A widespread process of 'deskilling' evident among Indochinese arrivals in the late 1970s and early 1980s has been overcome by a minority of early arrivals and this may prefigure a higher degree of social differentiation within the Indochinese communities.

Among ethnic Chinese from Vietnam the picture is somewhat different. Traditional patterns of trade have been reconstructed in Australia — particularly in services: restaurants, groceries, piecework clothing production and so on. In some places these ethnic Chinese have joined with or competed with Australian-born Chinese who formerly dominated niches in these areas. In other places, where there are concentrations of Indochinese, ethnic Chinese from Vietnam dominate shopping areas. This has changed the urban landscape and led to opposition from some Australians, while others welcome the open signs of diversification of our culture.

Capacity to speak and write English is the single most important factor in success in the job market, in social mobility and in settling generally. Moreover, Australians value the acquisition of English by immigrants and refugees highly, as the most important sign of integration and a commitment to their new country.

The early Vietnamese arrivals had the most English on arrival, as we would expect, and later arrivals of all three communities have had substantial difficulties in acquiring English, despite a range of programs funded by the government to assist in this.

The initial settlement of refugees in migrant hostels gave an opportunity for all arrivals to take part in English programs. Despite average stays in migrant hostels of six months, acquisition of English by Indochinese has been very patchy. This is because refugees have been faced with the choice of finding a job quickly or pursuing English seriously and this conflict has not been resolved.

Indochinese seeking factory jobs have not been greatly impeded by their lack of English, since employers generally do not expect any substantial capacity in English, and often use one English speaking refugee as a group representative. Similarly, most jobs *within* the ethnic communities require little or no English. The effect of these factors is to concentrate employment in these areas and thus to restrain occupational mobility and integration in the wider community.

Former middle class refugees with a good standard of education have achieved substantial English capacity, but generally lack the means or opportunity to upgrade this to levels appropriate for regaining their professional occupations. This process is also substantially hindered by non-recognition of qualifications achieved in the Indochinese countries or in France.

Elderly Indochinese generally have little or no English, and little prospect of gaining meaningful capacity. This results in complete family dependence or social isolation. Acquisition of English by young refugees has been rapid, but gaps in their education deriving from lengthy periods in refugee camps or from non-attendance at school in their home countries have caused severe problems for their educational progress in Australia.

English capacity remains a constraint on economic advancement, social mobility and integration into the wider community for most Indochinese. This experience was similar for earlier migrant groups, and both Indochinese and Australians look to the second generation to overcome this obstacle.

This expectation is well-founded: all the evidence, despite the difficulties, is that the children of Indochinese refugees are doing well, sometimes exceptionally so, in the school system. This is reinforced of course by the cultural values Indochinese attach to education in terms of social status.

We have little evidence to offer on social mobility as yet. The 1981 Australian census showed, looking at occupational status, that the earlier waves of mainly European migration had resulted, over a generation and a half, in an occupational profile of overseas-born and Australian-born

Cambodian worker in a flower farm, suburban Melbourne, 1987.

persons that was quite similar, with the exception of some concentration of southern Europeans in lower status jobs. This meant a considerable achievement by these immigrants in terms of social and economic mobility, as these factors are closely related in Australia.

We will have to wait for the census at the end of this century to see what has happened to Indochinese over time, and whether race has made a difference in this. Other evidence about the occupational status of other Asians (migrants from ASEAN and other Asian countries), who are well educated and middle class, suggests that Australia presents economic opportunities and does not deny these on grounds of race. It seems that class location and the availability of economic opportunity may be the most important factors in social mobility.

At present the picture is fragmentary. It seems likely that economic security has been achieved by most Indochinese, and that some, especially Vietnamese, are doing well in economic terms. This is only beginning to be translated into occupational and thus social, mobility. But there are large groups among the Indochinese who, because of structural factors such as level of education and English, cannot expect such mobility and who thus pin their hopes on their children.

The Australian government, on accepting Indochinese, has generally sought to settle them across the country. Unlike the United States, in Australia refugees usually entered migrant hostels in state capitals, and their numbers were distributed in proportion to state populations.

But as observed in the US, an important secondary migration to major population centres such as Sydney and Melbourne took place, and within those cities, to particular suburban locations. Part of this secondary migration was due to the availability of job opportunities, but more importantly to the formation of ethnic communities which would collectively provide economic services (in finding jobs) and fulfil social and cultural needs.

These informal, wider ethnic communities are divided by ethnic group, although Australians generally perceive them all as Vietnamese. Ethnic Chinese areas are quite discrete and concentrated, ethnic Vietnamese areas are more dispersed and have class features, and Kampuchean and Lao communities are much smaller and dispersed. There are also corresponding formal ethnic associations, with vigorous factional disputes and an important role to play in linking government and community.

But it is the informal networking of ethnic communities, based on ethnicity, former place of residence, clan ties, religion and so on, that works to settle Indochinese, not principally government or community efforts. These however, tend to place a floor under the informal system. Thus for Indochinese, ethnic communities are an essential part of settlement at least at this early stage of the process.

Australians, on the other hand, are much more ambivalent about this. It was a perception of the development of permanent ethnic ghettos that sparked the debate on Asian migration in 1984, which revealed local and broader resentment of Indochinese.

It is not so much the competitive aspects of these communities (that is, for jobs) but rather a belief that these ethnic communities oppose or reject integration in the wider community, which is highly valued by Australians.

This is in part a forgetting of history: a similar concern was voiced about Italian ghettos in the 1960s, and this is now transmuted into pride in the 'ethnicity' of these areas and the contribution of these migrants to Australia. More important is a concern about racial enclaves being a threat to Australia's social fabric and the sometimes explicitly stated fear of racial violence in Australia — on the lines of that occurring in Britain.

These fears have direct consequences for refugee entry and settlement: they drive down the propensity of Australians to accept more refugees and they can influence adversely social interaction between Australians and Indochinese.

While a degree of social tension with racist overtones does exist around these ethnic communities, the occurrence of violence between Australians and Indochinese has been extremely minor and confined to isolated instances, generally sparked by cultural conflict.

It is also the case that, while these ethnic communities are replenished from new arrivals, one can observe a continuing process of out-movement *from* the communities, as some Indochinese families do well, move into middle class suburbs, and adopt Australian economic values: a three bedroom brick veneer villa in the suburbs, with two cars.

So long as this process continues and grows, the underclass racial stereotyping of Indochinese is undermined. Broad economic growth, the maintenance of open economic opportunity, and access to English are the keys to the middle-classing of Indochinese in this and the next generation. And, over time, the willingness of Australians to accept Asian refugees depends on the working through of these broad social forces, and Australians' perceptions of this process.

These ethnic communities have not played a high profile political role. Certainly, adoption of Australian citizenship by Indochinese has been rapid, as might be expected from the uncertainties engendered by refugee status.

Beyond this, the anti-communism of these groups is predictable as was their early preference for the conservative side of Australian politics. But there are some signs of change in this area, as part of the process of economic mobility and political change.

These ethnic communities are still too new, too tiny, and too faction ridden to play a significant part in the ethnic politics of Australia. The Australian born still dominate in this country not so much through any Anglo-Celt conspiracy, as through the acceptance of, and change in Australian values by second generation immigrants and refugees, and the weakness of a multiplicity of ethnic minorities.

Naturally, the Indochinese in Australia want to maintain and strengthen their cultural heritage, but there are powerful forces pulling in other directions.

Among Indochinese arrivals in Australia there were high proportions of incomplete families, substantial numbers of young single males unattached to families, and high dependency ratios. These abnormal family patterns have been exacerbated by the strains of settlement.

The high proportion of working married women has meant changes in marriage partner

Vietnamese family, Melbourne, 1981.

relations and put strains on the status of men. Fertility patterns appear to have moved to fewer children. Traditional control of young people is breaking down also. Indochinese families are subject to high levels of stress in getting and holding jobs, in gaining English and in interaction with a largely indifferent host community.

One common reaction to these changes inside the Indochinese ethnic communities is a reaffirmation of traditional customs and values: in festivals such as the Tet celebrations of the lunar New Year, in emphasis on religion, in reinforcement of mother language in ethnic schools, and in attempts to shore up patterns of status and authority in kin and wider groups.

The most obvious arena for cultural tension and change occurs with Indochinese children in Australian schools. At school, these children are subject to the powerful socialising process of Australian cultural norms as well as the kinds of racial discrimination practised by children against outsiders. At home, the children are under substantial pressure to perform well at school and to maintain their community's cultural values. The fact that these cultural conflicts are experienced to varying extents by other migrant groups in Australia does not minimise the enduring costs to the child and their family.

Language problems, changes in family values, nostalgia for loss of country and alienation from the host society form the context for problems of cultural change and psychological adjustment among the Indochinese in Australia.

From an Australian point of view and in an historical perspective, the migration and settlement of Indochinese in Australia represents a major stage in its development as a nation. It stands as a test case of the disestablishment of the 'white Australia' policy. Given the disasters of this policy in the past and the treatment of Aborigines, the big question is whether Australians will be able to ensure the circumstances and climate of opinion for the successful integration of a racially different group of communities on terms of equality into Australian society. So far, there are grounds to be moderately optimistic.

From the viewpoint of Indochinese, struggling with family reunion, economic security, social mobility and cultural tension, the same question is framed in a different way. Will Indochinese families be able to find an accepted place in the wider

Australian community on terms of equality with Australian-born citizens and at the same time maintain their cultural identity? Indochinese will answer for themselves, but one can perceive a trade-off in the form of sacrifice of a degree of cultural identity for acceptance in the wider community, so that the choices for them are much less enviable.

For Australia, although the crisis period of refugee flows of 1977 to the early 1980s is over, and the focus has shifted to the impact of settlement, the issues that caused these refugee flows in the first place remain unresolved.

Vietnam remains isolated in South-East Asia and the Cambodian problem remains in a state of stalemate. Relations between Vietnam, China and the US remain antagonistic and Soviet influence has changed significantly. In all of this 'high' politics, those Cambodians in refugee camps in Thailand remain hostage to these unresolved political conflicts and largely forgotten in national and international councils. Further, though Vietnam has now withdrawn its forces from Cambodia, the refugee outflow from Vietnam continues.

What one thinks about this period of refugee entry in Australia's history depends much on the historical perspective taken and the values applied. It can be argued reasonably that Australia did its fair share, albeit reluctantly at times, in a major international crisis, and acted, moreover, for moral as well as self interested reasons.

Compared to other countries in this crisis, and to other times in our own history, there is something to value in this, not least as a good basis for a positive rather than negative outcome on the question of settlement.

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Michael Dugan was born in 1947, in Melbourne where he still lives. During his career he has worked in bookselling and publishing and has edited several magazines.

From 1983 to 1986 he was publications editor for the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. His own books include collections of poetry, anthologies of poetry and short stories by Australian authors and many children's books.

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Morag Loh is a freelance writer and lecturer from Melbourne whose work has dealt extensively with migration to Australia and the migrant experience. A pioneer of oral history, she was one of the first to present the perspectives of immigrants in books, radio and theatre.

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